

Saturday 28 November 2015

Amateur Photographer

Low-light champ
We test the **Sony A7S II**



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How to take award-winning landscapes

LPOTY winner reveals
how you could win in 2016



14 **top photographers**
reveal their **essential**
accessories

EXCEPTIONAL MONOCHROME The winners of **APOY Round 8**



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hair and
make-up
in here
asap?"**

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When I was eight, I entered a competition. The aim: to fit as many items into a matchbox as possible. A Lego brick, pin, needle, dust, grit and a leaf

ended up in there – small and meaningless on their own, but together they'd make me a champion. In the end I fitted in over 100 items (you'd be surprised what a matchbox holds).

An invitation arrived for the awards ceremony and I was sure I'd won. However, as the prizes

were handed out, I found I was second. I'd been beaten by an elderly woman, by one item – a grain of sand. I was upset to lose by something so small, and the fact that the winner was at least 70 years older than I was. 'I'm only eight, I should have won!' I sulked in the car home.

On pages 23-27 Andy Farrer reveals how he won Landscape Photographer of the Year, and how you could win next year. Take his advice, as it might be something small that makes all the difference. **Richard Sibley, deputy editor**

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK



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IMAGES MAY BE USED FOR PROMOTION PURPOSES ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

EY Huset by Dmitri Popov

Sony Alpha 6000, 50mm, 1/200sec at f/8, ISO 100

This week's picture, of the EY Huset building – one of the tallest in Denmark – comes from photographer and AP reader Dmitri Popov. Looking through Dmitri's work it's clear that he's part of a number of emerging architectural photographers who favour detail, graphic arrangements, colour and clean bright light.

'After a week of rain we finally

had a sunny day in Aarhus [Denmark's second largest city],' says Dmitri. 'I seized the opportunity to take out my new Sony Alpha 6000 with an E PZ 16-50mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS kit lens attached. I took a few photos of EY Huset's glass facade against the blue sky. Of all the images from the set, I decided that this one was easily the best of the bunch.'

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Send us your pictures

If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

Email Email a selection of low-res images (up to 5MB of attachments in total) to appicturedesk@timeinc.com.

CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 20.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

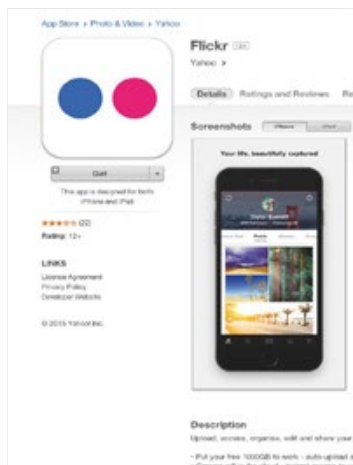
Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 20.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

Flickr for iOS 9

The Flickr app for iOS 9 is now available from the App Store. It includes a range of features for use with Apple devices such as 3D touch, which allows you to preview content such as photos, people and notifications on your iPhone 6s or 6s Plus. Spotlight search allows you to search for albums, groups and recently viewed photos without opening the app.



© ANDREW LEE

Top nature photos

Nature photography fans can vote for their favourite image from 25 of the world's best photos that form part of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year's People's Choice Award. Visit www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/wpy/community/peoples-choice/2015/index.html.

New Leica '0.95' collection

Leica has paid homage to its Noctilux-M 50mm f/0.95 Asph lens by launching a £110 keyring (right) and a £575 fountain pen. The items are among a collection of 'premium accessories' launched under a new Leica brand called '0.95'. They all come embellished with a hand-engraved '0.95' logo. Launched in a tie-up with French luggage maker ST Dupont, the luxury items also include a £575 lighter and a roller-ball pen, priced £475. For details visit uk.leica-camera.com.



Nikon sales drop

Sales of Nikon interchangeable-lens digital cameras dropped 11.1% for the three months to 30 September 2015, while Nikon lenses fell 10.1% compared to the same quarter last year. However, the D750 (left) and D7200 DSLRs saw an 'upswing' in sales.

© NOAH SEELAM/GETTY IMAGES



WEEKEND PROJECT

Shoot scanography

Scanography is a way of capturing three-dimensional objects using a flatbed scanner and, because scanners have been designed to replicate documents, it's possible to achieve incredibly close focus on your object. There is a twist, though: despite the close focusing, scanners don't require a great depth of field, as they're only designed to scan flat items. Consequently, the only parts of the scanned object that remain sharp are the points in contact with the glass plate.

Scanners create their own light, so there's no need to worry about illumination since the scanner head produces a soft and even light as it passes across your chosen object. Scanography can produce some beautifully detailed results, so why not give it a go?

1 Make sure the surface is clean, otherwise you'll end up spending a lot of time retouching the image later in Photoshop. Then arrange your object, but try to avoid using heavy items as this can break the glass or mount.

2 Leave the scanner lid upright and, if working at night, switch off all lights. If you're working in the day, use a box with a hole cut in the base to place over your object to avoid unwanted light encroaching on your scan.

Altered image

A photographer who removed straw from a portrait of a gorilla submitted to an Australian photojournalism contest has voluntarily withdrawn his entry, according to *The Guardian*. David Caird reportedly used cloning to alter the image, taken at Melbourne Zoo earlier this year, which he entered into the Nikon-Walkley Awards.



BIG picture

Hindus across the world celebrate the 2015 Festival of Lights

◀ In this overhead scene from Getty photographer Noah Seelam, we find ourselves suspended above the busy hands of Indian potter Chelimila Veera Swamy. Chelimila was photographed making earthen pots, or 'diyas', that would then be used at the Diwali festival on the outskirts of Hyderabad in India, which took place earlier this month. Diwali is a five-day festival of lights observed on the 15th day of the Hindu month of Kartika (October/November). Many people in the UK celebrate Diwali each year. Diyas, which are lit and placed around the home, are in heavy demand during the Diwali festival, which marks the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and hope over despair. More specifically, the festival commemorates Hindu god Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and his return to his kingdom's capital, Ayodhya, after 14 years of exile. Next year's festival will take place on 30 October.

Words & numbers

Taking pictures is savouring life intensely, every hundredth of a second

Marc Riboud
French photographer
b 1923

£825
Price of the new 'solid grey' Leica D-Lux compact

3 Set the Image type to 48-bit Color and the Resolution to 600dpi, and ensure other adjustments are de-selected – to treat the scan in a similar way to a raw file. Click Preview and the scanner will sweep over your object.

4 If you're happy with its placement, select Scan. To save your image, select TIFF in the Image Format Type. Then hit OK. Open the scanned image and make any adjustments needed to give it a bit more 'bite'.

Use your flatbed scanner to capture three-dimensional objects, such as this agapanthus



© PHIL HALL

Fernando Guerra's winning image.
Project name: EPFL
Quartier Nord. Architect:
Richter Dahl Rocha &
Associés. Location:
Ecublens, Switzerland



© FERNANDO GUERRA

Architectural photographer of the year revealed

FERNANDO Guerra from Lisbon, Portugal, has been named overall winner of the Arcaid Images Architectural Photography Award 2015 with an image of a building in Ecublens, Switzerland (above). Fernando's image came top in the Buildings in Use category.

The Arcaid Images Photography Award aims to highlight the skills

and creativity of the specialist contemporary architectural photographer.

Entrants were challenged to look beyond the architecture and 'consider the merits of the photography for composition, sense of place, atmosphere and use of scale'.

The contest aims to translate 'the sophistication of architecture into readable and understandable two dimensions – to explain and extol the character, detail and environment of the [architectural] project'.

Photographers were asked to submit pictures in four categories: Exteriors, Interiors, Sense of Place and Buildings in Use.

Organisers added: 'The experience of architecture for the majority of people is via images. The architecture itself is the focus and the image regarded only as the medium.'

Architects Fabrizio Barozzi and Alberto Veiga, two of the judges, said in a statement: 'The high level of photography has made it a very difficult task to choose the winners.'

'The most important thing for us has been the concept and atmosphere of the images – how

they have been perceived and expressed through the creativity and inspiration of the photographer.'

Another judge, Katy Harris, said: 'It has been fun and really enjoyable – a great opportunity to see so many high-quality images of well-known and obscure locations. Judging has been inspiring and challenging.'

Speaking earlier this year, Christine Murray, editor of *The Architectural Review* and a fellow judge, said: 'I believe architectural photography should not be solely focused on the building, but give you a wider sense of context.'

'Like the photographs in old issues of *National Geographic*, I want to experience this place and its people. I want to feel like I've travelled.'

The work of the shortlisted architectural photographers is due to be showcased at east London gallery Sto Werkstatt in London EC1R from 5 February–25 March 2016.

Arcaid Images is a photography agency founded by architectural photographer Richard Bryant.

Shortlisted photographs went on show at the World Architecture Festival in Singapore from 4–6 November, and the overall winner was named at a gala dinner.



© SU SHENGLIANG

Su Shengliang from China was named runner-up in the Interiors category



PARIS PHOTO
2015 IS CLOSED

Paris Photo published a statement on its website

Paris Photo closes early

ACCLAIMED international art fair Paris Photo was forced to close following the terrorist attacks on the French capital on 13 November.

'Following the decision of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, all Ile de France cultural institutions... will be closed Sunday November 15,' organisers said in a statement.

The closure brought an early end to this year's event, which had opened to the public the day before terrorists claimed the lives of 129 people and injured hundreds more.

Last year's fair attracted almost 60,000 visitors – a 58% rise on the 38,000 who attended in 2010.

This year's show featured 173 exhibitors and the work of 1,258 artists, including Ansel Adams and Berenice Abbott.



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Winner of the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2015: 'Five Girls 2014', by David Stewart



UK photographer wins £12K portrait prize

A UK photographer who began his career shooting punk bands such as The Clash, has won the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize with a restaged version of his 2008 entry.

David Stewart beat nearly 5,000 entries with an image called 'Five Girls 2014', a portrait of his daughter and her friends.

The portrait, which mirrors a photo Stewart took of the girls seven years ago, earned the photographer the £12,000 top prize.

Stewart said: 'I have always had a fascination with the way people interact or, in this case, fail to interact, which inspired this photograph... While the girls are physically very close, and their style and clothing highlight their membership of the same peer group, there is an element of distance between them.'

In the first version of the image, the girls were about to start their GCSEs. In the updated version, they have just graduated from university.

The £3,000 second prize went to Iranian-born Anoush Abrar, who lives in Switzerland. London-based photographer Peter Zelewski came third and wins £2,000.

UK photographer Ivor Prickett won fourth prize and £1,000 with a photograph of a displaced Iraqi family who had fled their village near Mosul after ISIS took control.

The award was announced by the National Portrait Gallery.

Taylor Wessing is an international law firm.

Pentax reveals new DSLR lens

PENTAX brand owner Ricoh Imaging has revealed a new 35mm lens for its 645 medium-format camera system that it claims delivers a 'smooth, beautiful bokeh'.

The new HD Pentax-D FA645 35mm f/3.5 AL [IF] lens is designed to deliver the 35mm equivalent of a 27.5mm lens when mounted on a 645Z or 645D body. It is due to go on sale in mid-December, priced £1,549.99.

Features include a 'high-grade HD coating', a nine-blade rounded diaphragm and a minimum focusing distance of 0.3m.

Pentax says the lens is designed for wideangle landscape and architectural images, plus close-ups of subjects 'while retaining the... sense of depth'.



The new HD Pentax-D FA645 35mm f/3.5 AL [IF] lens

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Phil Hall

NORTH YORKSHIRE



Moorsview exhibition

This exhibition, at the Joe Cornish galleries in Northallerton, showcases the wide range of photographic opportunities that the North York Moors and coastline have to offer. It includes images by renowned local photographers Lizzie Shepherd, Richard and Janet Burdon, Karl Holtby, Dave Mead, John Clifton and John Potter.

Until 19 December, www.joecornishgallery.co.uk

LONDON TO BATH



Cathedrals Express

Running from London Paddington to Bath, and back, this steam-hauled train offers the potential for some fantastic photo opportunities. Find yourself a picturesque spot along the route as it travels through the Cotswolds.

29 November, www.steamdreams.co.uk



Sony Awards

There's still time left to enter the Open section of the Sony World Photography Awards. Aimed at enthusiasts, and with 10 different categories to choose from, the judges are looking for your best single image taken in 2015.

Until 5 January 2016, www.worldphoto.org

Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize



LONDON

Always thought-provoking, the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize showcases traditional and contemporary approaches to portraiture. This year's exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery features personalities like Benedict Cumberbatch and President Barack Obama.

Until 21 February 2016, www.npg.org.uk

LPOTY

With fantastic scenic views on show, now is your chance to see 2015's winning and commended Landscape Photographer of the Year images. You can catch the fabulous selection at London's Waterloo mainline terminus.

Until 7 February 2016, www.take-a-view.co.uk

LONDON





Viewpoint

Tony Kemplen

A chance flea-market find of an old **Konica AA-35** half-frame 35mm camera proved excellent value and perfect for in-camera panoramic sequences

I hadn't heard of the Konica AA-35 until I stumbled upon it at a local flea market last year. At first glance it looks like a disc camera and, given its scruffy state, I nearly didn't pick it up. But when I did, I realised that it was a half-frame 35mm camera. There was no battery in it, so I had no way of knowing if it worked, but for £3 I decided it was worth a gamble. Back home, after a bit of Googling, I found a manual for it and put the correct battery in. I also learnt that in many parts of the world it was named the Konica Recorder, perhaps a reference to its superficial resemblance to one of the Walkman-style cassette players of the early 1980s when this model was launched.

If it were in better condition, the Konica AA-35 would be quite a sleek object. With its gold-brushed aluminium finish and satisfyingly smoothed corners, it fits nicely in the hand, and slips easily into the pocket. When not in use, the front of the camera is fairly featureless, as the lens, autofocus and exposure-sensor windows are all neatly protected when the case slides shut. As with many compacts of this era, the Konica relies entirely on electronics in order to function. The film advance and exposure are all fully automatic, with no manual overrides other than the option to switch on the built-in flash. The only adjustment that the user needs to make is to set the ISO of the film, the options running from ISO 100 to 400. Luckily, it uses readily available AA batteries, unlike some cameras from this era, for which tracking down the right battery can turn into an expensive quest.



The fountain at the Sheffield Peace Gardens – complete with yellow dye

Everything seemed to work, so I loaded it with some Agfa Vista film from Poundland and pressed it into service for week number 222 of my '52 Cameras in 52 Weeks' project. I was quite impressed with this unexpected find: the 24mm f/4 Hexanon lens was nice and crisp, and the autofocus performed well. The programmed electronic exposure ranges from 1/60sec at f/4 to 1/250sec at f/16, so while not suitable for low-light photography, it can cope with a useful range of situations.

'The film advance and exposure are all fully automatic'

You get an awful lot of photos from a half-frame camera. It takes double the number of frames per roll, so with a 24-exposure film you have 48 shots to play with. When you have ploughed through to the end of the film, a little light starts flashing, prompting you to flick the rewind switch on the bottom to return the film to the cassette ready for processing.

Half-frame cameras are ideal for playing around with in-camera panoramic sequences. The unusual colouring in the picture above isn't due to me messing around with cross-processed or expired film – the water had been dyed yellow to herald the Tour de France event in 2014!

Tony Kemplen's love of photography began as a teenager and ever since he has been collecting cameras with a view to testing as many as he can. You can follow his progress on his 52 Cameras blog at 52cameras.blogspot.co.uk. For more photos from the Konica AA-35 visit www.flickr.com/tony_kemplen/sets/72157643016696545



Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 20 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



© TIM RUDMAN

Iceland: An Uneasy Calm

By Tim Rudman, OAS Books, £55, hardcover, 132 pages, ISBN 978-0-99330-531-3



IN AP 15 September, we took an in-depth look into master photographer and printer Tim Rudman's engrossing and evocative take on landscapes. His latest work, collected in this volume, focuses on

his journey through Iceland to capture the ghostly landscapes and 'uneasy calm' of the region. It's the visual silence of the images that's the real appeal. The minimalist landscapes feel bereft of human presence and life. Tim's exquisite toning further emphasises the photographs, making them appear almost as if outside of time – as though they could have been dug up from the earth, or perhaps even the soil of an alien planet. This is a real masterwork in landscape photography, printing and composition. Iceland, as we have seen time and again, is a popular destination for photographers and it's refreshing to see the region in a fresh light. ★★★★★

The Snowflake: Winter's Frozen Artistry

By Kenneth Libbrecht and Rachel Wing, Voyageur Press, £15, hardcover, 144 pages, ISBN 978-0-76034-847-5



NO MATTER how old you are, there will always be something enchanting and magical about snowfall. But the magic doesn't end at white-powder snowscapes and snowmen. Get a little closer and a whole new world is revealed. It's pretty difficult to overstate

just how incredible snowflakes are up close, and here Kenneth Libbrecht, the world's leading snowflake expert, accompanied by park ranger and snowflake chaser Rachel Wing, give readers the ins and outs of the frozen artistry of snow. Seriously, it's mind-boggling. This is a genuinely beautiful little book.

★★★★★



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Can't live without...

Our experts reveal their must-have accessories and the items they never leave home without

When we think of our must-have accessories, we naturally imagine popular kit such as tripods, heads, filters and flashguns. There's no getting away from the fact that for many, these are essential accessories that have become invaluable in helping to achieve the desired shot.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Wander into a camera shop with its walls covered in accessories of all shapes and sizes, and the huge volume of kit designed to help a photographer in their pursuit of a great shot becomes quickly apparent.

Which is exactly why, when you ask a number of photographers which accessory they can't live without, the answer isn't ever as obvious as you'd expect it to be. Lurking deep inside most photographers' camera bags are lesser-known pieces of kit that, at first glance, probably don't look all that important or remarkable. But these practical treasures are often vital in that photographer's arsenal and he or she would be lost without them.

And it's not just the kit that's packed away inside a camera bag that's important; some photographers rely on non-photographic gear – such as clothing – to help them get the shots they need. Others have even fashioned their own bits of equipment to help achieve the results they're after.

To find out more about those items that photographers never leave home without, we asked a host of professionals with a range of different photographic backgrounds for their one essential accessory. With answers ranging from gear to invest in to £3 bargains, you might be surprised at their must-haves...



© JUSTIN MINNS

SealSkinz Dragon Eye gloves

● £38 ● www.sealskinz.com



WINTRY landscapes and frosty mornings are the sort of conditions that look stunning, but they can also make life difficult for photographers. When you're standing around on a beach

waiting for the sun to rise with an icy wind whipping off the North Sea, it doesn't take long for your extremities to go numb.

Having tried all manner of gloves in the past, I've finally found a pair that I can't do without. SealSkinz Dragon Eye gloves are waterproof, windproof and hard wearing, but the anti-slip material allows me to operate the camera fully without having to take them off. Both index fingers and thumbs are touchscreen compatible so I can also use my phone, and there's even a microfibre patch on the back of each thumb to wipe watering eyes or whatever else happens to be running. What more could you ask for from a pair of gloves?

Justin Minns

www.justinminns.co.uk





A torch



FLASH can be great a great way of adding light to your images, but I've always found it a bit cumbersome and lacking in finesse, especially with my insect and fungi macro work. A few years ago I experimented with a torch to add a touch of brightness and warmth, and to eliminate shadows in my images.

I found the type of torch was vital and discovered that the old filament-style bulbs are best. They give a warm yellow light, especially when the batteries are low. Some of the more modern bulbs tend to give a bluish feel to the light, which has the effect of cooling the image and making it less appealing. I also found that a torch where you can change the spread of the beam was ideal. I could either bathe the whole subject with lovely warm light or be more precise and direct it to a specific area.

As I experimented more I learnt how great a torch is for creating backlight, especially with small subjects like fungi and flowers. I always use a cable release so I can move around my subject with the torch, shining the beam at various angles. When I review the images I can then decide the best distance of the torch from the subject to create the ideal amount of light and the best direction for the type of image I'm working on.

Paul Hobson

www.paulhobson.co.uk



© PAUL HOBSON

Adobe Photoshop

● £8.57 per month ● www.adobe.com/uk



PHOTOSHOP is an important tool to further your creative vision. I create art, and Photoshop is a tool I can't live without because I have a vision of perfection for each of my photographs. I can use

Photoshop to increase the aesthetic and artistic impact of my images.

As a travel photographer, I often have to work in conditions with limited control over a scene and its lighting. For example, I might have to remove unwanted bright spots or clutter in a photo to help make the final piece more pleasing to the eye. Photoshop can help improve the photo in this regard, along with other aspects such as composition (cropping) and the colour scheme, such as muting a

specific colour, bringing out the blue in water or sky, enhancing the green of foliage or the colours in clothing.

My photos have so much more impact if I have the control to brighten the subject more. By making the eyes shine in a portrait (with the Dodge tool focused on the catchlights in the eyes) and, conversely, making certain areas of the photo darker, I can help draw attention to the subject. Using Adjustment Layers and Layer Masks is also a great way to control the editing of a photo. Understanding how to use a Layer Mask means you can paint an effect in or out of your photo (such as brightness, darkness or a colour tweak) to certain parts of the frame and not to the entire image.

David Lazar

www.davidlazarphoto.com



© DAVID LAZAR

PocketWizard Plus III Transceiver Twin Set

● £190 ● www.pocketwizard.com



THESE handy camera remotes operate as both receiver and transmitter, and enable me to

operate another camera remotely from a position I'm unable to get to – for instance, behind the goal at football matches or next to a fence at horse racing (right).

This little gadget on my trusty old Nikon D3 not only doubles the chances of getting a good picture, but the combination of the low angle and wideangle lens also gives you a completely



© ANDY HOOPER

different perspective. Don't expect to get a good picture each time, but it can help.

Andy Hooper

www.andyhooper.co.uk



© MARK BAUER

Zeiss lens-cleaning spray

● £25 for lens-cleaning kit ● www.zeiss.co.uk



KEEPING lenses and filters spotlessly clean is essential – even a small smear or drop of water can have quite an impact on an image, rendering part of it unsharp or causing flare. If you're shooting at the coast, it's not always that easy to keep filters and lenses clean, as sea spray is hard to wipe off – it tends to

smear over the surface of the glass or resin.

I always keep a bottle of Zeiss cleaning spray in my camera bag; you just spray a little on a lens cloth and then use this to wipe it off. It provides a quick, easy and effective in-the-field solution, which enables me to get good results, even in challenging conditions.

Mark Bauer

www.markbauerphotography.com



Manfrotto MN026 Lite Tite Swivel Adapter

● £23.95 ● www.manfrotto.co.uk



© JAKE HICKS



IN MOST studios you'll find a boom-arm stand, which enables you to position a light directly above a model by extending it out along the arm. This is great for angling the light source directly in front and above a subject to create flattering light. It is most commonly known as 'butterfly lighting' and is used a lot in beauty photography, because it creates very symmetrical light that's pleasing to the eye.

For most of us, though, it can be tricky to create this straight-on symmetrical lighting because the light stand gets in the way. Instead, we have to position the light source to

one side so we can shoot past the light stand, ruining any chance of symmetrical lighting. An obvious alternative is to place that key light on a boom arm, but we may not have the time, space or money to make that happen.

For a simple alternative, try the right-angle knuckle attachment. Place it on your light stand and mount your light at a right angle, and it'll give symmetrical lighting plus all the space you need. Be wary though, because as the weight distribution on the light stand is now on one side it's advisable to add counterweights to the stand.

Jake Hicks

www.jakehicksphotography.com



Nikon DR-6 right-angle viewfinder

£209 • www.nikon.co.uk



IF THERE is one item that will benefit your photography in a very big way, it's a right-angle viewing attachment. In fact, I would rather forget a lens than this extremely handy little accessory. It just makes life so much easier and where once you would have been reluctant to get down that low, this makes it a breeze. Yes, many cameras have articulated LCD screens, but I find it next to impossible to compose a photograph accurately when using one if your viewing of the image is compromised by what is going on in your peripheral vision.

I find it an invaluable item whether I'm photographing plants and fungi, wildlife or landscapes. It enables me to obtain those low-level views where, in the case of wildlife, it affords me a more intimate perspective, while with seascapes and waterfalls it means I can shoot extremely low without my boots filling up with water!

Robert Canis

www.robertcanis.com



© ROBERT CANIS

Seeland Estate 18in Vibram 5mm boot

£125 • www.seelanduk.co.uk

© MARK LITTLEJOHN



WHEN running workshops, the one accessory I always remind clients to bring are Wellington boots. They're the first things I pack when I set off on a shoot. I like to explore all sorts of

locations, in particular ancient woodlands that are often found in wetlands. Sometimes these areas might be a long way from the nearest road and might require you to walk several miles. At that point you have fairly stringent requirements for your footwear. Your boots need to be comfortable over long periods, have good grip over a variety of terrain and be waterproof to at least shin level.

For that reason I invested in a pair of Seeland Wellington boots. They have Vibram soles that give me excellent grip in all conditions and 5mm thick neoprene, which means I can stand for long periods in very cold conditions. They fit my feet perfectly and I'm able to walk for several miles with no issues. When I took this image ('Swamp Monsters', left) I was standing more than ankle deep in a rather smelly bog. Without the wellies I wouldn't have been able to get to the right position.

Mark Littlejohn

www.markljphotography.co.uk





© RICHARD PETERS

Camtraptions PIR sensor

£164 www.camtraptions.com



THIS may not be the obvious choice for a piece of camera equipment, but over the past year I've developed a fond attachment to my Camtraptions PIR sensor.

Although camera traps are often thought of as complicated, this isn't always the case. With my PIR sensor, I can attach it quickly, frame up and leave the camera to do its thing. If the subject walks within range of the sensor, the camera is activated. Because of this, it's possible to take photos day or night.

It provides a good opportunity to photograph a shy species like the badgers that visit my garden at night (above), but beyond that it's also useful to help gain a new perspective, allowing you to get up-close wideangle views that might otherwise be impossible if the camera was in hand. Being small and light, this is now something that I always have with me, so I can take advantage of any situation that may present itself.

Richard Peters
richardpeters.co.uk



© STEVE GOSLING

Ilford FP4 Plus b&w film

● £4 ● www.ilfordphoto.com

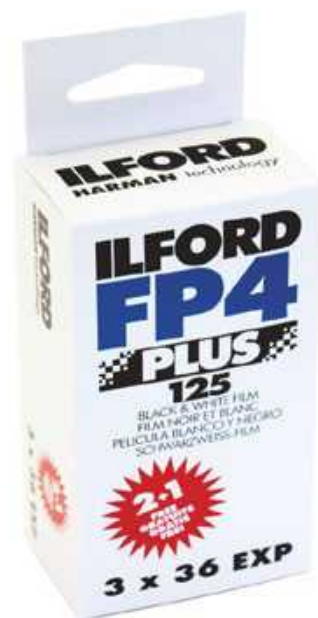


WHEN I got my first camera at the age of 16, the first thing I did was put in a roll of Ilford FP4. I was excited to shoot my first roll of what I hoped would be beautiful black & white landscapes. It didn't

quite turn out that way as I screwed up most of the exposures and realised I had a lot to learn. However, the one thing I did get right was the choice of film, because ever since I've loaded many different cameras with FP4, (now FP4 Plus) and have always loved the results.

This film is known for its fine grain and sharpness, but to me it has a special character. It's great to work with during processing and can be very forgiving in terms of exposure miscalculations. Although I shoot mostly digital now, I wouldn't be without a roll loaded into my Contax G2 while I'm out on the streets. Shooting film makes me think differently about my photos and black & white.

Rupert Vandervell
www.rupertvandervell.co.uk



Apple iPhone

● iPhone 6s £539 ● www.apple.com/uk



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC accessory I'd struggle to give up is my iPhone. It's in constant use when I'm out in the landscape.

I regularly use apps that give me weather forecasts, up-to-the-minute satellite images of weather systems, tide timetables, and sunrise/sunset and sun positions at various times of the day and year.

My spot meter has virtually been replaced by an app that gives spot-metering facilities for taking exposure readings from different parts of the scene and I have an app that calculates the exposure when using ND filters. I also have a viewfinder app that shows me the framing options for every camera/lens combination I own.

Once I've taken the photo, there are various photo-processing apps. Oh, and I nearly forgot, it has a pretty good camera built in as well! I tend to use this as my 'Polaroid' (see left) to take a test image while exploring.

Steve Gosling
www.stevegoslingphotography.co.uk



© PAUL SANDERS

Home-made stocking filter



THERE's one piece of kit I take everywhere with me. I don't always use it, but it's a bit special. In my search to express my mood through my images I needed something that adds a certain darkness at the time of shooting rather than trying to recreate it in Photoshop afterwards. So I stopped at a local lingerie store and bought a pair of five denier black silk

stockings. I stretched the stocking over an empty Lee Filter frame (normally used for the Wratten filters I once owned) and, lo and behold, I had a home-made filter that accentuates darkness while softening highlights. I love this filter, partly because of the effect, but more because I made it myself and it works just as I want it to. Total cost, £35.

Paul Sanders
www.paulsanders.biz



© PHILIP SMITH



Clothes pegs

● £3 ● www.ocado.com



MY CHIROPRACTOR will tell you that I carry around a big rucksack full of hi-tech gizmos to help me make the images I want – loads of lenses, wireless connection and grad filters. But there's

always a space in my bag for my clothes pegs.

In photographing close-ups of plants and flowers, detail is everything to me. For my commercial work it's important that the viewer has a clear view of the plant – its colour, form and mood. The trouble with plants is that they're always embedded among a lot of visual material that I don't want in the final image. In a public garden, taking out secateurs and clearing stuff away from the subject will, rightly, lead to a firm request to leave.

Using clothes pegs carefully to bend and hold unwanted material out of the way will get you the shot you want without harming the plant – especially if you use wooden pegs. I can't do without them!

Philip Smith

www.philipsmithphoto.com

Leica Ultravid 8x20 Blackline binoculars

● £540 ● www.leica-camera.com



I'M A WILDLIFE photographer who likes to travel light, but I never leave home without binoculars. I enjoy tracking down my subjects and being able to scan and search effectively is important. The number of photographers I encounter who have no binoculars with them always surprises me.

These days, binoculars come in all sizes and vary in price from under £100 to over £1,000. I use a pair that weighs less than 400g, but newer versions weigh a little over 200g, and are known as miniatures. Swarovski, Zeiss and Leica

make high-quality miniatures, typically 8x or 10x magnification with an objective lens of 20mm. It's the size of the objective lens that dictates how big the binoculars are, not the magnification. So, an 8x42mm is roughly twice the size and weight of an 8x20mm.

Carrying a pair of binoculars is not just useful for your photography, but it opens up a new world. Those distant objects that you might not have bothered checking out become interesting. You never know, you might just turn into a birdwatcher!

David Tipling

www.davidthipling.com

© DAVID TIPLING



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

DSLR debate

I read your article *Ditching your DSLR* (AP 31 October) with interest as it mirrors my own experience. I started my photographic life in the late 1950s with a Kodak Retinette, which I still own. I then progressed through a number of DSLRs to the present Nikon D800 with a range of lenses.


Advancing years caused me to use this less and less because of the size and weight, although it did – and still does – produce wonderful detail and images. Some 18 months ago I bought an Olympus OM-D E-M1 with three lenses, a Leica 25mm f/1.4, a Panasonic 14–140mm f/3.5–5.6 zoom and an Olympus 17mm f/1.8. This combination comfortably equals the equivalent Nikon for prints up to A4 and just about A3.

Modern EVF systems are just as good as optical systems, with

excellent colour rendition, and also allow additional information to be displayed. Except for specialised work, I think that the mass market for full-frame DSLR cameras will decline and the future will be smaller EVF-based systems. This is evident by the market share enjoyed by Olympus and the increasing popularity of the OM-D range.


Geoffrey H Robinson, Fife

I agree. There's a place for DSLR cameras in certain specialist areas and, of course, there are still people with a preference for larger cameras. Generally, though, digital camera technology has progressed very quickly, and for many photographers the advantages of DSLR cameras are diminishing – Richard Sibley, deputy editor



Win!

With ultra-fast performance, the new Samsung 16GB EVO SD card, Class 10, Grade 1, offers up to 48MB/sec transfer speed and has a ten-year warranty.
www.samsung.com



Taking stock

Has the world of photography gone mad? I ask because I seem to be facing a crazy, Kafka-esque, Catch 22-type situation in my attempts to source and compare two Fujinon XF lenses for a second-hand Fujifilm X-Pro 1.

Yes, there are plenty of online adverts for Fujinon lenses, but can you actually see and handle them? I can't find anywhere to do that in the Manchester area. John Lewis? 'Not in store, sir'. Currys? 'Not in store, sir.'

No, I don't want to order online. I want to handle, compare, check the weight and ease-of-use of two lenses – the sort of thing that was absolutely basic in the Dark Ages of the independent retailer. But now? May the force be with you.

Geoff Hough, Staffordshire

We're sorry to hear that you're struggling to get your

hands on these lenses, Geoff. We can recommend a few retailers in your area who might be able to help.

Try Wilkinson's (www.wilkinson.co.uk/stores), LCE (www.lcegroup.co.uk/Branch-Finder), Calumet (www.calphoto.co.uk/store/manchester) or the Real Camera Co (www.realcamera.co.uk). Alternatively, it might be an option to try out both lenses through a service such as www.hireacamera.com (which delivers nationwide) and, once you've handled them, then order online – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

Seeing the Lightroom

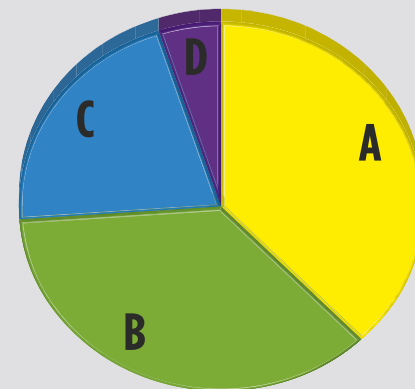
In response to Chris Thurman's nostalgic reference to film speeds (AP 24 October), being an octogenarian I remember it only too well. I was chatting to a camera club member

recently, discussing sharpening in Photoshop, and I harked back to the days when we used acutance developers like Definol and Hyfin to enhance edge sharpness. I even used to make up my own 'Beutler' two-bath soup. Oh yes! Neofin Red and Blue spring to mind as I write.

The films we exposed to extract the best from these developers were Kodak Plus-X, Ilford PanF and ADOX KB14, the latter being the slowest of the bunch, I believe.

My print developer was D163 to achieve those superb blacks printed on Kodak Bromesko, white fine-lustre paper. All of that is a distant memory, of course, as we use Lightroom with the best of today's editing facilities. And I have to concede that my images today are very much sharper than those of yesteryear.

Ron Fletcher, South Yorkshire



In AP 7 November we asked...

Do you prefer a camera with or without an optical low-pass filter?

You answered

A It makes no difference to me. Overall image quality is more important	38%
B I prefer not to have an optical low-pass filter	36%
C I don't have a strong opinion either way	21%
D I prefer to have an optical low-pass filter	5%

What you said

'There should have been an option to vote for "I've never used a camera without one" for those of us who haven't and so wouldn't know what difference it makes'

'False detail is less desirable than slightly reduced detail, so low-pass filtering is necessary'

'My Nikon D800 has one, my D800E has one and another filter to negate the first, and my D810 has none. But you know what? I can't tell the difference'

'I like no optical low-pass filter and a method of simulating the function of one when required. Like my Pentax K-3 II does! It's the best of both worlds'

'I can understand that they were needed in early cameras, but I'm less convinced they are needed today. I've never suffered moiré with or without it'

'I can do without the filter'

This week we ask

If you could only ever shoot on one focal length again, what would it be?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the camera



Every other week we post a photograph of a camera on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the make and model. To guess the make and model of this camera (above), head over to www.facebook.com/Amateur.photographer.magazine. Forum members can also enter via the Forum.



The cover published in AP 7 November is from 2 August 2003. The winner is Bryan Metters from Lancashire, whose guess was closest to the correct date.

➤ JPEG justice

It was good to see Professor Bob Newman (AP 31 October) addressing the fate of JPEG 2000, which nobody uses and which seems largely unmourned.

As a wedding photographer I use a Nikon D4 and shoot raw files on one memory card and fine JPEGs on another.

I can't remember the last time I had to use a raw file. I keep taking them, more as an insurance policy than because I need to. I recently bought a Fujifilm X-T1 for personal use and I find myself shooting JPEGs exclusively with it, because the files are so clean and the colour rendition so accurate that raw files seem superfluous.

I know this is heretical, but I think we have to recognise that JPEG has moved on and is no longer the poor relation of a raw file.

Ian Macilwain, Aberdeen

Whoa, there! While we're not quite ready to burn you at the stake, there is a definite advantage to shooting raw files. Yes, the in-camera renditions from JPEGs are far better than they used to be, but you should treat your raw files like negatives. While there



The new Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX1R II has a full-frame sensor and fixed 35mm f/2 semi-wideangle lens

are many people who are perfectly happy with the JPEGs their camera produces, I found I went the other way. I always used to shoot raw and JPEG, and then never used the JPEGs! So now I exclusively shoot raw – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

Why wide?

We recently saw the launch of a high-end compact camera from Sony with a semi-wideangle lens on it [pictured above], and before that the Leica Q with a wideangle lens. But who wants to take pictures in this way?

Surely the owners of these cameras would end up cropping their pictures to the normal 43° angle that we view the world?

Wouldn't it be a better idea to put smaller sensors on

these cameras to give them a 'normal' view, or maybe put a 50mm lens on to avoid the crop of the end result?

Andrew Redding, via email

Who wants to shoot in that way? Well, lots of people. Many people prefer using a 35mm lens as a standard as it provides a slightly wider view that allows for some documentary and landscape images. Similarly, if you shoot street photographs, travel images and landscapes, then going even wider can be a benefit. With the resolution of these cameras, you can always crop in and still have a good-quality image. But you can't shoot at 50mm, then change that to a 28mm field of view in Photoshop – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

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Land lover

Landscape Photographer of the Year champion **Andy Farrer** discusses the methods behind his award-winning work. He talks to **Oliver Atwell**



ALL PICTURES © ANDY FARRER

It beggars belief that there are still those among us who believe that the better the camera, the better the images. True, the clarity of said images may mean that we can see every blade of grass on a sweeping vista, but a great camera cannot compose, create atmosphere or draw out the hidden qualities of a landscape – that all comes from the photographer. Still unsure? Let's consult Andy Farrer, who was recently crowned 2015's Landscape Photographer of the Year.

'The hotshoe on my Canon EOS 5D Mark III is completely useless,' says Andy, when I ask him about the camera he uses. 'One or two buttons

are a little stiff. One of the quick-mode buttons doesn't work at all. The delete button is difficult to press. The cable release has corroded. Oh, and the mode dial at the top of the camera is such that I actually can't tell what mode I'm putting it on.'

'Are you absolutely certain this camera actually works?' I ask in disbelief.

'I sent it off for a service and they told me it was beyond economic repair,' says Andy. 'It has a great deal of corrosion on the inside as well. But it still works!'

It was Andy's unconventional shot of Bat's Head in Dorset that found him taking the LPOTY crown (see

The Pinnacle Stack on the Jurassic Coast near Swanage in Dorset

page 24). In his words, winning was 'mind-blowing'.

'As you can imagine, you get so familiar with hearing everyone else's story of how they won,' explains Andy. 'I don't think I was especially coherent when I was talking to [LPOTY founder] Charlie Waite on the phone. It was all a bit of a blur. It sunk in a couple of days later. I've now seen the LPOTY 2015 book and seen my image in print. I can relax knowing it's definitely there.'

There's a great deal to admire about Andy's winning shot. A cursory glance may show a fairly conventional image, but a closer look will reveal a photograph that thrives on its fractal



The often overlooked view of Bat's Head on the Jurassic Coast in Dorset (and Andy's winning LPOTY image)



A rugged stretch of the Devon coast photographed at the end of the day



➤ nature. Note how the jagged formation of the cliff face is mirrored not just in the space between the snow and tide, but also in the faintly visible stratus clouds. Also, look closer and you can see a tiny archway. It seems incidental, but you could almost believe Andy is thumbing his nose at the scene that sits just behind the visible frame. For if the lens were to turn 180° we would find ourselves confronted by the famous archway that has been the bread and butter of many a visitor to Dorset's chilly coastline – Durdle Door.

‘I think more than anything the shot feels believable,’ says Andy. ‘It’s all about the leading lines and the patterns. Charlie was particularly fond of the fact that the surface area of the cliff is the same size as the surface area of the shingle beach. All the elements combined are very simple but effective. Charlie felt that he could imagine himself standing there with me just behind the camera. That’s the kind of feeling landscape photographers strive to convey; it really is the point, to make people feel transported.’

Words of advice

Andy has some clear advice for people looking to enter photography competitions. In his opinion, ‘subtle’ images don’t do so well. Look again at Andy’s winning photograph and you can see what he’s talking about. It’s an image

WORKING WITH FILM



'I'M NOT someone who pines for the days of film, but I'm so glad I learned that way,' says Andy. 'If I'm using Lightroom and producing a mono conversion, I know what the red slider will do because I have such a strong understanding of what a red filter will do on the front of a film camera. I learnt it all back in the day and it became instinct. Seeing the images come up in the developer tray certainly cemented my love of photography. Working with film involves so many of your senses. You have your fingers in the chemistry and you can smell it. The more senses that are involved in a process, the more it sinks into your psyche. I'm absolutely delighted I had my photography training in film.'

This image of Corfe Castle in Dorset won first place in the Breathing Spaces category of International Garden Photographer of the Year 2014



Above left: Fiery red maple leaves beneath a tree

Above right: The first frosty morning of autumn 2014, with the oak tree still full of auburn leaves. Dorset's Corfe Castle and the Purbeck Hills are in the background



with several clear compositional elements; it has an obvious identity.

'What I'm really trying to say is, you have to enter images that you truly believe in,' says Andy. 'It's a trap I've fallen into before when I've entered more obvious, filler shots. You can enter a lot of images into competitions, but I've tried not to do that. I wanted to enter shots that I was 100% pleased with. Everything I put in, I knew I could justify.'

There's perhaps another key to Andy's success. His winning image was taken in Dorset, an area he is more than familiar with. In fact, he has spent most of his life there.

'We have such an amazing coastline,' says Andy. 'I can almost see Old Harry [chalk sea stacks on the Isle of Purbeck] from here. Then

I can travel and shoot all the way to east Devon and the Jurassic Coast. There are so many things to see and they never look the same twice.

You can go to Kimmeridge umpteen times and the clouds are always different, the tides are always different and bring in new rocks, while the waves make fresh patterns in the sand. As I know the area so well, I can go out and find nooks and crannies that other people may miss.'

What Andy is saying here is that photographers, with their innate sense of exploration, often find themselves travelling far afield to achieve breathtaking landscapes. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, but the glamour of travel can often mean we overlook what's right under our noses. Take a look

outside and there are countless landscapes that could easily go on to feature in a winning image.

'A few years ago, once photography became the lion's share of my income, I was able to get out a lot more and started doing much longer circular walks to see the bits of Dorset that get overlooked,' Andy explains. 'You soon begin to realise that everyone has their Durdle Door shots. Eventually, you're going to want to achieve something a bit different. Things like the weather can help to shake things up a bit, but you need to train yourself to see a location from a different perspective – find ways of seeing something that perhaps weekend photographers visiting the area wouldn't bother with. It's





ANDY'S TOP TIPS

1 When entering competitions, make sure you can justify the work. Why does the image work? What does it say about the landscape? Is it something we've seen a thousand times before? What elements does it contain?

2 Know your area. The more you know the landscape, the more likely you are to find unique shots. Great things can be found on your doorstep.

3 Reject preconceived ideas of a landscape otherwise you risk missing anything that doesn't fit your idea of the location.

4 Look the other way – the most obvious scene is not necessarily the most interesting. Turn around and you may find something no one else has seen.

5 While there's value in digesting the work of other photographers, you can almost do it too much – so much so, that you risk repeating familiar images. Have a clear idea of the landscape, but try to do it through images that were not created as 'artistic' shots. Check out the snapshots on Wikipedia, for example.

➤ always good to know your area. Getting unusual shots helps communicate that you know the land well.'

Being prepared

Every photographer has had those character-building times of naivety where an absolute lack of preparation has led to many wasted hours. Those times provide invaluable lessons, but even the most budding landscape photographer can still take measures to make sure they're ready for the journey and there are several tools that can help you out.

'The most obvious one is the Photographer's Ephemeris (www.photoephemeris.com), which enables me to double-check where the sun is going to be,' says Andy. 'I can also check the tides if I know I'm going to be near water. With a location like Durdle it doesn't matter so much, because it's a location that looks good at both high and low tide. However, with somewhere like Kimmeridge there's not much left at high tide because then you're right up against cliffs.'

When it comes to checking the weather, Andy uses a desktop Mac app called MeteoEarth



Top: Colmer's Hill near Bridport is a common sight for anyone heading west out of Dorset on the A35. It looks fabulous shrouded in mist on an autumn morning

Above: The dazzling yellow of an oilseed rape field in full bloom on a Dorset farm

(www.meteoearth.com). This handy tool creates animated radar, rain charts and cloud maps displaying the speed and direction of the clouds. You're also able to see beyond your area to give you an idea of what nasty surprises may be on their way, which is particularly important if you're looking to capture a beautiful sunrise that may well be obfuscated by a fat bank of cloud cover.

'I love going out and shooting when it's misty,' says Andy. 'It's so atmospheric. You can go into the

woods or get onto some high ground and everything looks transformed. Equally, snow changes everything, especially when you're visiting the same area over and over again. It's nice to see familiar areas looking so different. Summer can be challenging, though. The days are long and the light is harder. I quite like the early morning hours and the late afternoon, especially in winter when the atmosphere is a little clearer.

'I tend to always take my camera and favourite lens out with me,



Above: A snowy beach and receding waves at Durdle Door in Dorset

wherever I go,' he continues. 'I carry my 100-400mm with me everywhere. The long lens is really important for my landscape work. It's one that I find is often overlooked. The number of times I shoot between 200mm and 400mm is unbelievable. I think I'd feel quite inhibited with a 70-200mm. I wouldn't want to go back to using a lens like that now. Having said that, my winning shot was actually taken on a 50mm Zeiss lens.'

Like any good landscape photographer, accessories feature in the Andy Farrer arsenal. We've asked a host of experts for their must-have accessories on pages 10-16 of this issue, but for Andy the main accessories take the shape of a good tripod, a loupe and filters.

'My Gitzo tripod has been great,' says Andy. 'It's had a good four years of abuse. Actually, I just got off the phone with Gitzo, because, like my Canon, I had to send it off for a service. Some of the leg locks are stuck.'

One especially interesting accessory is Andy's Hoodman loupe, which allows him to easily check the focusing.

'In bright sunlight the loupe is incredible because you can really see what you're doing without the sun blinding you,' adds Andy. 'It's an immensely useful piece of kit. I also have pretty much all the Lee filters. I think the 1.2 ND is my favourite of the bunch. I've just got myself the new landscape polariser actually. It's fantastic, being very warm.'



Left: A classic view of Buachaille Etive Mòr, at the head of Glen Etive in The Scottish Highlands

Local hero

Andy is one of those fortunate people who is able to make a living from his work. The majority of this income comes from print sales and workshops, where he takes attendees into the glorious wilds of Dorset.

'Most of the images I sell are my local images,' says Andy. 'I suppose that's where most of my Facebook "likes" come from. People see me and my work in Dorset and then follow me on social media. It's all tied up with what I was saying about getting to know your local area. So, for example, when it snows where you are, you can maximise those conditions from a business point of view because those images will stand out. When I'm out shooting, I have to think "What's going to sell?" Anything with a landmark will

certainly sell. Not everything is necessarily motivated by an artistic decision. The nature of landscape photography is that you have to speculate to accumulate.'

Andy signs off with one final piece of advice. 'Quite a lot of what's necessary to put yourself on the path to achieving engaging images is not tied up with learning how to control the camera: it's about training your eye,' he says. 'You must learn to see all over again.'

He explains that photographers can't just turn up to a location, put their tripod up and start shooting – they need to crouch down low, get up high and explore every vantage point available. Once they've learned how to do that and it becomes instinctive, they've taken one of the biggest steps a landscape photographer can make.



Dorset-based Andy Farrer is the 2015 Landscape Photographer of the Year winner. He offers numerous courses through his website and has several prints for sale. To see more of his images, visit www.andyfarrer.co.uk

LOCATION GUIDE

Reculver Castle

Perched on the edge of the north Kent coast, Reculver Castle is an imposing spot, as **Robert Canis** explains



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SITUATED on the north Kent coast, in sight of Herne Bay to the west and Margate's Turner Contemporary art gallery to the east, Reculver is an exposed stretch of beach and cliff where a delightful walk will lead you all the way to the famous fishing town of Whitstable in one direction, and to Birchington-on-Sea in the other. However, for photographers and the multitude of day-trippers who visit each year, the main attraction is the twin towers of the ruined 12th century monastic church that once stood there. A Roman fort originally held the position, and when you are there, standing on the very spot it once stood, you can see why such a strategic location was chosen, affording clear 360° views.

The adjacent, and now silted up, River Wantsum was originally up to two miles wide and separated the mainland county of Kent and the Isle of Thanet, providing a major shipping route from the English Channel to the Thames estuary. Now, just a few metres wide, the channel can be seen inland as you walk along the sea towards Birchington.

Reculver really is a wonderful site to explore, with so much to offer the photographer at any time of the year, from landscapes and rock-pool close-ups, to butterflies, flowers and birds. It is this sheer diversity that entices me back time and again.



Either end of the day will provide brilliant light if the conditions are right. This is looking east at sunrise



Try to time your visit to coincide with low tide to make the most of the beach



Robert Canis

Robert has been a professional nature photographer for more than 20 years. He is represented by several international agencies and regularly leads wildlife and landscape workshops.
www.robertcanis.com

KIT LIST

▲ Filters

You will find a polarising filter, ND and ND grad filters useful. All have their advantages, but if I were to pick one it would be ND grads to reduce the exposure difference between the sky and beach.



◀ Wellingtons

Something as simple as a pair of wellies will increase your choice of shooting angles immensely. Without them you'll be tiptoeing between rock pools; with them, you can position yourself wherever you like.



◀ Tripod

If you want to take advantage of shooting during periods of low light, such as at dawn and dusk, then a tripod (used in conjunction with a cable release) is an essential piece of kit that will reward you with consistently sharp images.

ALL PICTURES © ROBERT CANIS

Shooting advice

Time to visit

Knowledge of the tides will stand you in good stead as you don't want to arrive with the intention of shooting on the beach during an incoming tide, especially when you are backed up against the cliffs. There are plenty of websites that will give you up to seven days of tide times, and if you can coincide low tide with either sunrise or sunset, you will have access to Reculver's beach.

Either end of the day will provide innumerable opportunities. A calm dawn with wispy clouds is hard to beat, and if you visit in late summer, the sun rises directly next to the towers, which are then illuminated by the setting sun later in the day. I like to work on the beach a couple of hours prior to sunset among the rock pools and lugworm casts, shooting towards the towers. As the pink light of sunset turns to the blue of twilight, I'll walk to the opposite side of the towers and, perhaps, use the outflow (Kent's very own waterfall!) as an aid to provide foreground interest.

There's a large car park on the sea front, and given its location and elevated position you can do as much or as little walking as you choose. Even from the car park you can capture the towers and beach below, but if you want to get down among the rock pools on the beach you will need to walk in the region of half a mile return.

Food and lodging

Situated right next to the car park, The King Ethelbert Inn is the perfect place to refresh yourself or escape the biting wind that goes hand in hand with a winter's walk on the north Kent coast. They also do a fantastic Sunday roast.

The outflow onto the beach is perfect for creating foreground interest

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APOY 2015 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

BLACK & WHITE

It's the final round of APOY 2015. Here are the top 30 monochrome images from Round 8, **Shades of Grey**

Nicky Nunn from Enfield in north London is the winner of our black & white round of APOY 2015. Nicky takes home a Sigma dp3 Quattro camera and LVF-01 LCD viewfinder.

For the new dp3 Quattro, Sigma has redesigned every aspect of the camera, including the sensor, engine, lens and body. While retaining its textural expression, the updated Foveon direct image sensor produces images that are colourful, rich, deep and faithful. Unique among image sensors, the Foveon is similar to traditional colour film in that its multiple layers capture all the information that visible light transmits. Along with Sigma's proprietary image-processing technology, this sensor produces incredible resolution, precise gradation, strong colour with realism and a 3D feel.

The camera body offers a balanced shape, layout and weight distribution. Its robust specification allows the photographer to concentrate fully on photography

itself and use the camera's potential to produce outstanding images.

The dp3 Quattro comprises a fast 50mm f/2.8 (75mm equivalent) mid-telephoto lens. It's a simple but powerful lens and sensor combination that delivers medium-format-level image quality.

Almost all other image sensors are mosaic sensors, which use an array of red, green and blue colour filters in a single horizontal plane to capture colour information. Each pixel is assigned only one of the three colours, so it cannot capture all three at once. In contrast, the Foveon direct image sensor captures colour vertically, recording hue, value and chroma accurately and completely for each pixel. The dp3 Quattro also features the newly developed TRUE (Three-layer Responsive Ultimate Engine) III.

By attaching the LVF-01 to the LCD display of the dp3 Quattro, the LCD viewfinder cuts off outside light. It magnifies the LCD display 2.5x and allows you to easily check focusing. That's a total prize value of £1,079.99.



1st

1 Nicky Nunn
London 50pts

Canon EOS 650D, 18-35mm, 200secs at f/1.8

We had some amazing images for the final round of APOY 2015, Shades of Grey. The black & white rounds have always been popular with readers and, perhaps with the exception of abstract rounds, consistently have the strongest entries. Nicky Nunn has taken first place with this fantastic shot taken ringside at a boxing match. This is the perfect scene for black & white. The lighting in particular lends itself to the removal of colour tones as it allows our eye to wander around the scene, taking in the atmosphere. Also of note is the gaze of the boxer. Is he looking at us or the ring girl?

1

The 2015 leaderboard

It's the final round, so we can reveal that Lee Acaster has taken first place overall. It was a close call, as Chris Evans is just three points behind in second place. Penny Halsall is in third place, with Tomer Eliash and David Queenan taking fourth and fifth respectively

1 Lee Acaster	185pts	6 Aaron Bennett	146pts
2 Chris Evans	182pts	7 Graham Borthwick	144pts
3 Penny Halsall	177pts	8 Matt Parry	138pts
4 Tomer Eliash	162pts	9 Adele Spencer	136pts
5 David Queenan	153pts	10 Mark Cornick	126pts



3rd

3 Graeme Heckels
Thailand 48pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-G6, 100mm, 1/500sec at f/3.5, ISO 160

This picture was taken in Hoi An, Vietnam. Graeme found a vantage point from a bridge and looked down to where a traditional fisherman searched his giant net for his catch at sunrise. It's an exceptional shot that revels in the abstract and allows the reader to do the work. As a visual bonus, the textures of the net interplay with the light giving us a beautiful scene.



2



2nd

2 Aaron Bennett
Hampshire 49pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 50mm,
1/2,500sec at f/1.4, ISO 250

'Take away the colour and you can see the true meaning of an image,' says Aaron of this shot. He could be right. This is a strikingly beautiful portrait and it's worth paying attention to its tonal range. There's a deliberate washed-out quality to it, which adds much to its impact.

4 Roger Evans Shropshire 47pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 70-200mm, 1/500sec at f/2.8, ISO 2,000

You can positively feel the energy and focused determination of this weightlifter. The halo of chalk around his head is a great capture

5 Jay Heiser USA 46pts

Canon EOS 5D, 17-55mm, 1/100sec at f/14, ISO 100

'This was the scene on our patio, looking out from an upper-floor window, after a February snowstorm dropped a surprising amount of extremely dry and granular snow,' says Jay

6 Sebastian Butynski Cheshire 45pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 85mm, 1/160sec at f/2.8, ISO 1,600

Sebastian found this scene after a wedding ceremony at the Municipal Buildings in Crewe. It's an unconventional approach to wedding photography and, as a result, really stands out

7 Ian Cook Tyne & Wear 44pts

Nikon D7000, 17-55mm, 1/250sec at f/8, ISO 100

Ian has found the perfect composition to work with a square format. The black border holds the image in place and focuses our gaze

8 Shamil Khairov Glasgow 43pts

Pentax K-5, 16-45mm, 1/180sec at f/4.5, ISO 200

The more you look, the more you see. This a beautiful image that makes use of the strong reflections in the water to act as a backdrop to our river swimmer

9 Paul Cooper Herefordshire 42pts

Canon EOS-1D X, 600mm, 1/2,500sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

We see a lot of swan images, but this one stands out. The light falling on its feathers is a key element. As Paul says, it's almost as if the bird is shielding its eyes from the sun

10 Nick Hughes Worcestershire 41pts

Nikon D800, 18-35mm, 2.5secs at f/16, ISO 100, ND filter

With this restricted angle of view, the shadows are crucial in creating strong leading lines

11 Richard Craze Glamorgan 40pts

Olympus OM-D E-M1, 25mm, 1/1,600sec at f/3.2, ISO 100

This is a great example of how something mundane can be made extraordinary. These objects are simply plastic-covered hay bales

12 Paula Cooper Norfolk 39pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-G3 converted to infrared, 14mm, 1/200sec at f/4.5, ISO 200

This Dartmoor pony's strong pose helps to make it a successful shot

13 Penny Halsall Oxfordshire 38pts

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100, 28-100mm, 1/8sec at f/6.3, ISO 125

Penny's unconventional and striking portrait was created using glass, water, paint and light

14 David Queenan West Lothian 37pts

Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 180secs at f/16, ISO 200

The light in this image makes the towering structure appear almost fragile

15 Adele Spencer Ireland 36pts

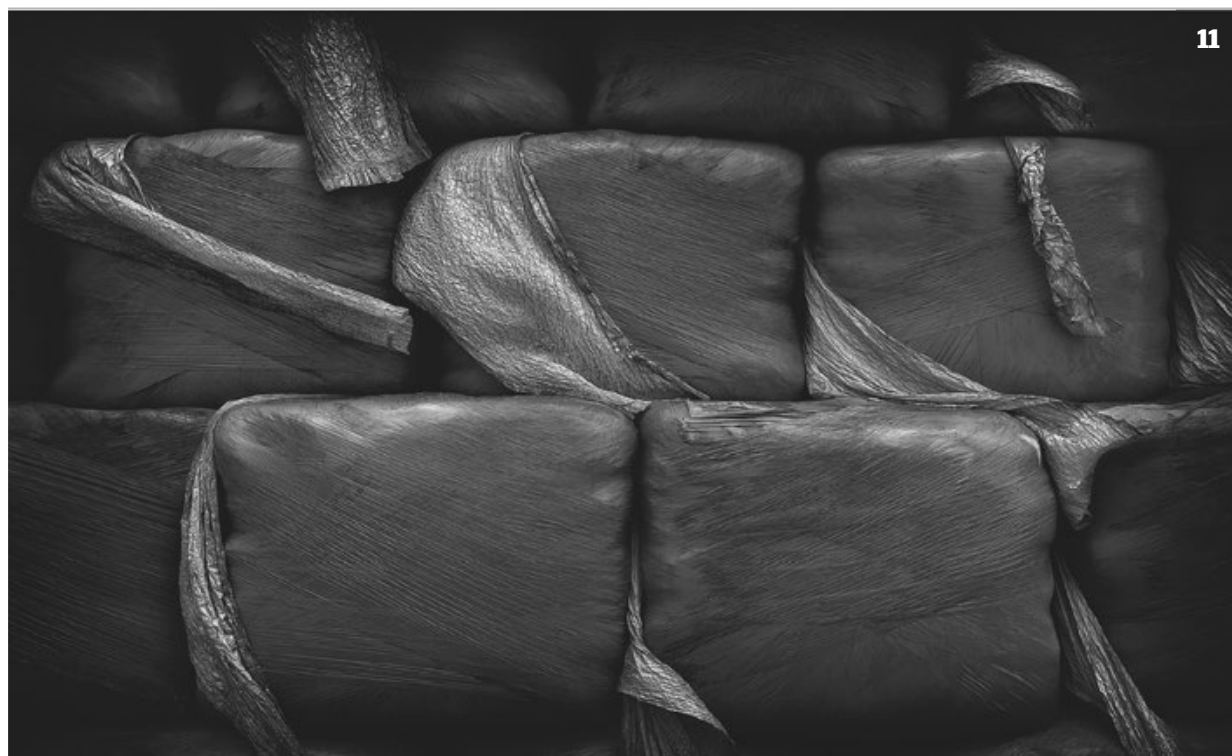
Canon EOS 6D, 17-40mm, 243secs at f/9, ISO 100

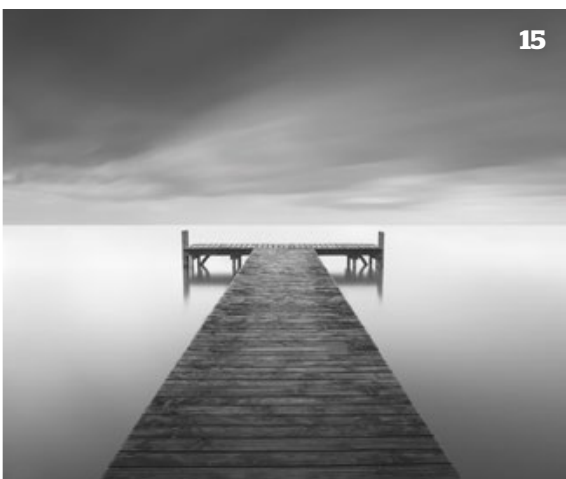
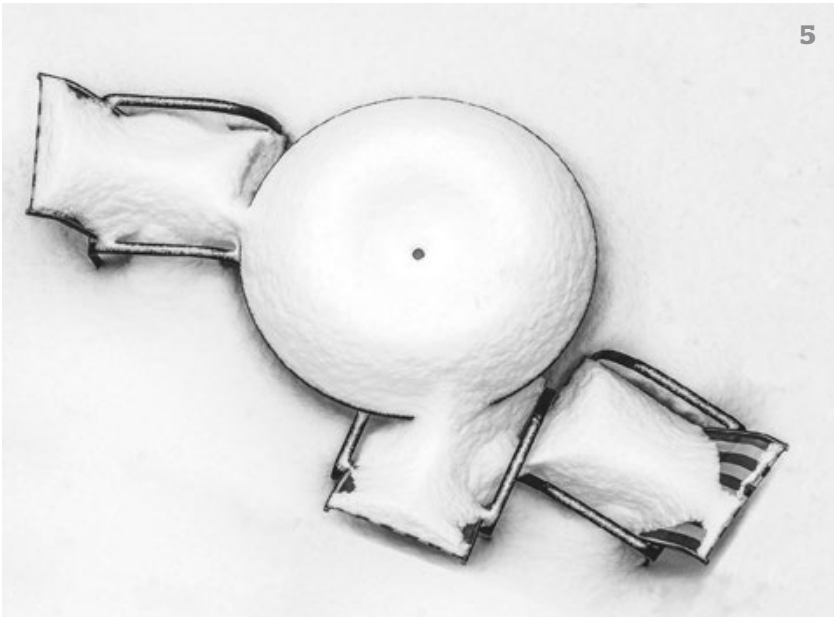
Adele's photo was taken at Lough Lene near Mullingar in Ireland. The black & white has drawn out the graphic qualities of the jetty

16 Mike Martin Bristol 35pts

Pentax K-5, 17-70mm, 1/30sec at f/4, ISO 400

This is the result of Mike's first (and only) nude workshop. He's made excellent use of the milky light flooding in from the bay windows





**‘Take away
the colour
and you can
immediately see
the true meaning
of an image’**



17 Adam Stephenson
West Midlands 34pts
 Nikon D7100, 70-300mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 640
 What amazing luck! Adam only realised what he had captured once he got home and worked on lowering the highlights

18 Jason Gilchrist **West Lothian** 33pts
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-70mm, 260secs at f/11, ISO 100
 The turret of Loch Turret in Crieff, Perth and Kinross, is an impressive structure and, with this long exposure, Jason has done it justice

19 Adam Lack **West Sussex** 32pts
 Pentax K-7, 70-300mm, 1/25sec at f/8, ISO 100
 Simple, effective – a masterclass in minimalism

20 Rob Deyes **Hull** 31pts
 Sony Alpha 7, 135mm, 1/500sec at f/5.6, ISO 400
 Rob found this street artist in Malta at exactly the right angle and moment

21 Graham Borthwick
Gloucestershire 30pts
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 70-300mm, 1/250sec at f/9, ISO 320
 This image looks like it was shot on location in Africa. In fact, it was shot at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire through five inches of glass

22 Eric Begbie **Stirling** 29pts
 Nikon D810, 28-300mm, 1/100sec at f/5, ISO 400
 A train journey through Sri Lanka provided this opportunity for Eric to take a portrait of a young girl watching his train pass hers

23 Chris Evans **London** 28pts
 Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7, 14-42mm, 1/50sec at f/5.6, ISO 200
 Chris says he'd normally use his Nikon D800 for portraits, but here decided to try with his GX7. The result is a perfectly executed study of one man and his cigar

24 Elisa Bortolotti **Italy** 27pts
 Nikon D40, 50mm, 1/125sec at f/2.8, ISO 200
 Elisa has timed this perfectly to capture the tiny rivulets connecting shoes to puddle

25 Tom Birtchnell **London** 26pts
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/2,500sec at f/2, ISO 100
 These flowers were backlit by a low sun, creating a washed-out effect and highlighting the petals

26 Dave Sharpe **West Yorkshire** 25pts
 Olympus Pen E-PL5, 45mm, 1/200sec at f/1.8, ISO 200
 This wonderful portrait uses subtle lighting to reveal the playful mood of the girl

27 George Digalakis **Greece** 24pts
 Nikon D7000, 18-200mm, 5secs at f/8, ISO 100
 Again we see how just a minimal number of elements can lead to an atmospheric image

28 Rhodri Williams
Greater London 23pts
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 70-200mm, 1/2,000sec at f/2.8, ISO 400
 This is a powerful image. The stag is complemented by the strong background

29 Luke Moseley **Blackpool** 22pts
 Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100, 19.9mm, 15secs at f/8, ISO 200
 Luke found this beautiful scene at the Falls of Falloch, near Loch Lomond

30 Peter Murrell **London** 21pts
 Nikon D300S, 11-16mm, 1/40sec at f/4, ISO 320
 The graphic King's Cross Thameslink Station foot tunnel in London really lends itself to black & white imagery



18



19



22



26



‘The graphic King’s Cross Thameslink Station foot tunnel in London really lends itself to black & white imagery’

30



29



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BEFORE



AFTER



The contrast has been reduced and the shadows lifted in the edited image

ORIGINAL



Ben cropped his original image, above centre, to suit the subject matter, but using unfamiliar proportions. The edited version, above, is a slightly different shape and uses a 16:9 letterbox-style frame

Karting Ben Leslie

Sony Alpha 350, 70mm, 1/40sec at f/22, ISO 100

IT'S VERY hard to create a go-karting picture, or one of any motor racing on a track, that's of interest to people not already involved in the sport. To the untrained eye, most racing just looks like lots of cars going around a predictable route very quickly. Unless you've never seen a car going fast, or you are intimately acquainted with the driver or the intricacies of how one achieves such speed and position, the whole event can seem a bit dull and repetitive.

Images tend to be quite factual, as most photographers attempt to demonstrate a technical superiority over the challenges of creating a sharp and detailed image in such circumstances. This often supplants photography's primary aim of explaining the atmosphere of the occasion to those not there to witness it.

The collection of motion-blurred images that Ben has sent me is much more effective at relaying what it was like to be there, by presenting the speed and excitement in a way that no pin-sharp image can. By using a slower shutter speed, 1/40sec in this case, Ben gives us a real sense of the sport's speed, power and daring.

Ben has sent in his original shot along with his edit, so we can see how he arrived at his final composition. I think the crop was a very wise choice as it removes the boring background detail and allows us to concentrate on the action. Cropping the karts close to the edge of the frame also gives us a sense of pace and split-second timing – something clearly missing from the original frame.

My issues with the shot are that the crop looks like a crop because the proportions don't

correspond to any shapes we associate with photographs, and the contrast of the final image is such that shadows are lost to black and highlight to white.

I've gone back to Ben's original and re-processed it via Adobe Camera Raw. I reduced contrast, pulled down the highlights and lifted the shadows to make more of the picture visible. I then added a curve to the midtones to create the punch and tonal separation that makes us look.

My edit is a slightly different shape as Ben has cropped to suit the content rather than using proportions that we are used to. I like his idea of using a letterbox-style frame, so I used 16:9 proportions to remove the excess of grass in the background and road in the foreground. Nice creative thinking, Ben.



Win! Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (include the original files from the camera along with your versions on the CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 20. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned. The picture of the week will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99

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Ness Point, Isle of Skye Bob Hill

Fujifilm FinePix S5 Pro, 18-200mm, 1/160sec at f/10, ISO 160

I RATHER like this slightly factual picture that Bob has sent in. He hasn't tried to dramatise the view, make more of the scene than was really there, or use a photographic technique to create a sensation. The picture is very believable, and I get a real sense of what the place

is like and what it's like to be there. The scenery is impressive enough without human 'artistic' intervention and Bob has done very well to leave it alone and let it speak for itself. The only thing wrong with Bob's picture is the colouration. The reds

and yellows are too warm, and the blues and cyans too cool. A quick trip to the Hue/Saturation window fixed that, with a shift to all four of those colours making a much more neutral result. I am slightly bothered by that strip of land in the bottom right corner of the frame. It looks as though Bob didn't see it in the viewfinder when he was shooting,

and quite possibly it wasn't visible in his less-than-100% viewfinder. It would, however, have been visible on the rear LCD when the image played back. A shift in his position would have removed it. This needs to go because there isn't enough of it to feel as though it should be there, and there's too much for it not to be noticed. I cloned it out to show the image without it.



Squirrel Lisa Dearnley-Davison

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 70-300mm, 1/125sec at f/5, ISO 3,200

IT'S EASY to dismiss pictures of squirrels as cheap shots, because these inquisitive creatures are relatively easy to get close to. Humans are also easy to get close to, but we don't think, 'Oh no, it's another *Homo sapiens* picture – how boring'. I like this shot because Lisa really has the squirrel's attention, and that eye contact draws us in. The shallow depth of field and a 150mm focal length is perfect for the occasion, as she has the head in focus and the rest of the body gradually softening away in to the distance. In fact, the eyes aren't quite the centre of the focus area, but the little catch lights are hard enough that we can be fooled – and that's OK. Lisa has made a well-judged crop to create a portrait from a landscape-format image, but I would like a little more of the background to give us some context. She's sent in the original file, which shows much more tree, so I made a square crop that includes

enough for us to imagine the squirrel is in the forest – not running around in a zoo. It was an overcast day, and Lisa's image is suitably cool to show that. I've created a more fictitious set of circumstances by warming the shadows and midtones to give an autumnal

air to the scene. It isn't the truth, but I don't really care; this is art, not the news. I like Lisa's shot the way it is – mine is just an alternative view – so she and her squirrel friend win the Picture of the Week award. Well done, and acorns all round!



Warm shadows and midtones give the image a more autumnal feel

Damien Demolder is a photographer, journalist and photographic equipment expert, speaker, judge and educator. He has worked in the photographic publishing industry for 17 years, including 15 years at *Amateur Photographer*. He uses a wide range of equipment, from wooden plate cameras to the latest DSLRs, and is a great fan of all products that make good photography more accessible to more people

'JETTY'



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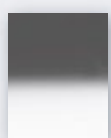
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Manfrotto PIXI EVO tripod

£44 • www.manfrotto.com

Callum McInerney-Riley takes a look at **Manfrotto's** latest mini tripod

At a glance

- Tabletop tripod
- Extendable legs
- Adjustable ball head

THE NEW Manfrotto PIXI EVO is a small, lightweight, portable tripod. As the EVO name suggests, it is an 'evolution' of the original Manfrotto PIXI. It now includes a new solution for mounting your camera, with a wheel below the 1/4in tripod thread allowing you to screw into the camera's thread. (Previously, you were required to spin the whole tripod around to attach the camera.) The ball head has also changed, allowing the camera to drop to 90° portrait orientation thanks to a specially made groove on the side. A thumb screw is used to tighten the ball head, rather than the spring-loaded push-in mechanism found on the previous version. Perhaps the biggest difference, though, is the inclusion of extendable legs. These have a button at the top to allow an extension to five different lengths. There is also a locking system for two separate angles – from standing upright to nearly flat to the ground.

Manfrotto has rated the PIXI EVO to take a 2.5kg payload. This is impressive, especially if you bear in mind that a Canon EOS 5D Mark III with Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.6-5.6L IS USM lens attached weighs around 2.3kg.

Verdict

I must admit, when using the original Manfrotto PIXI I didn't think I'd find much use for it. But over time it proved its worth, as I found myself using it to prop up my camera on tables, on the ground for shooting cityscapes and even for holding an off-camera flash. The EVO expands this feature set and, while the extendable legs aren't designed to give any height advantage, they very usefully allow you to steady a camera on an uneven surface. However, this also means it flexes a lot more. For the most part, though, the PIXI EVO is very handy addition to a lightweight kit. It provides a stable footing for a camera and allows for better low-light and long-exposure photography.

Height

The PIXI EVO has a maximum height of 19.5cm and a minimum of 6cm.

Lightweight

The Manfrotto PIXI EVO weighs just 266g, making it almost unnoticeable when slipped into a kit bag.

Ground-level operation

A switch on the side slides across to allow the legs to widen and drop closer to the ground.

Extendable legs

A button on the legs allows them to extend outwards for better stability on uneven surfaces.

Amateur Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★

ALSO IN THE RANGE

Manfrotto Compact Light tripod

£39, www.manfrotto.co.uk

The Compact Light is a similar price to the PIXI EVO, but boasts a 131cm maximum height and weighs just 800g. It's more of a traditional tripod.



Manfrotto PIXI Mini tripod

£18, www.manfrotto.co.uk

The PIXI is the original version of the PIXI EVO and has many of the same benefits. It's small, light, portable and keeps a camera steady. However, it doesn't have the EVO's handy extendable legs or 90° tilt.



Manfrotto MP1-C01 Pocket Support Small

£19.95, www.manfrotto.co.uk

If you have a small CSC or compact camera, consider the Pocket Support. Designed to be left on your camera, it can be flipped outwards to support the camera upright on a flat surface.





Hama 2in1 USB 2.0 OTG card reader, SD/MicroSD

• £7.99 • uk.hama.com

SOMETIMES the simplest products can be the best. At first sight, Hama's 2in1 device looks like a conventional reader for SD and MicroSD cards, but it has two connectors, one on each end. A conventional USB 2.0 plug allows use with laptop and desktop computers, while more unusually, a standard micro USB plug provides on-the-go connectivity with compatible Android smartphones and tablets. This means that the reader allows you to browse images on your camera's memory card and copy them to your device for editing or sharing, with no need to set up a Wi-Fi connection, or indeed have a Wi-Fi-enabled camera or SD card at all.

The reader is compatible with computers running Windows (10, 8, 7, Vista and XP) and Mac OS 10.x, and many devices running Android 4.0 or later. It's small and neat, and will slip easily into a bag or pocket. In use it worked flawlessly on both a Samsung Galaxy Tab S 10.5 and HTC One M9 smartphone. Best of all, it's inexpensive.

This is a great accessory for any photographer with a compatible Android phone or tablet, and is now permanently in my camera bag.
Andy Westlake



**Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD**
★★★★★

The Hama 2in1's USB plug allows for on-the-go connectivity

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At a glance

- 12.2MP, full-frame Exmor CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-102,400, (standard), 50-409,600 (expanded)
- 169 contrast-detection AF points
- 5-axis optical image stabilisation
- 4K video (100Mbps)
- £2,500 (body only)

Sony Alpha 7S II

Is the **Alpha 7S II** the best choice for those specialising in video and low-light photography? **Michael Topham** finds out how well it performs in these two key areas

For and against

Astonishing ISO range (expandable to 50-409,600)

Supports 14-bit uncompressed raw format

Superb 5-axis image stabilisation system

Records 4K movie footage internally

Pixel count is low for still photography

Battery stamina (310 shots using viewfinder)

Lacks touchscreen functionality

Where in the range



Sony Alpha 7 II
Price £1,245 (body only)

The Alpha 7 II features a 24.3MP full-frame sensor with 5-axis image stabilisation and a Fast Hybrid autofocus system with 117 phase-detection AF points.

Sony Alpha 7R II
Price £2,600 (body only)

Sony's flagship CSC boasts a 42.4MP full-frame CMOS sensor, an ISO range up to 102,400 and a 399-point phase-detection AF system.

Data file

Sensor	12.2-million-pixel, full-frame Exmor CMOS
Output size	4240x2832 pixels
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	Sony E mount
External mic	Yes, 3.5mm stereo
Shutter speeds	30-1/8,000sec+bulb
ISO	100-102,400 (50-409,600 extended)
Exposure modes	PASM, auto, sweep panorama, scene
Metering system	1,200-zone evaluative metering
Exposure comp	±5EV in 1/3 or 1/2EV steps
Drive mode	5fps
Video	4K and full HD
Viewfinder	2.36-million-dot EVF, 0.78x magnification
Display	3in, 1.23-million-dot LCD
Focusing	Contrast detection with 169 points
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Power	NP-FW50 rechargeable Li-ion
Dimensions	126.9x95.7x60.3mm
Weight	627g (with battery and card)



When Sony launched the Alpha 7 and Alpha 7R two years ago, the manufacturer was looking to target two different types of photographer. While the Alpha 7 was out to appeal to enthusiasts looking for a full-frame camera with an ‘all-round’ level of performance, the Alpha 7R was aimed at landscape and studio photographers who wanted to record the highest level of detail from Sony’s 36.4-million-pixel full-frame sensor.

Not content with two models in the Alpha 7 series, Sony identified demand for a third Alpha 7-series model that would satisfy the needs of videographers who wanted to record 4K video – while also fulfilling still photographers’ requests for a camera that could perform exceptionally well in low light. The Alpha 7S received high acclaim from those it was designed for. However, there were a few characteristics that could be



This image, which was shot at ISO 25,600, reveals that you can comfortably shoot at very high ISO sensitivities

improved – its autofocus system and handling being two examples. With the Alpha 7 and Alpha 7R now in their second generation, it was only a matter of time before Sony focused its attention on the Alpha 7S again in an attempt to make it even better. On first glance you'll notice that the Alpha 7S II is built around an improved body that's identical to the Alpha 7 II and Alpha 7R II, but there's plenty more to comment on besides.

Features

Unlike the Alpha 7R II, which improved on its predecessor by debuting the world's first back-illuminated full-frame chip with a 42.2-million-pixel resolution, the Alpha 7S II employs the same 12.2-million-pixel full-frame Exmor CMOS sensor found in the Alpha 7S. Although this pixel count seems low when compared to other full-frame cameras on the market, it has a significant advantage over sensors with a higher pixel density in that each

photosite (or pixel) on the chip is larger. The combination of a large full-frame imaging sensor and larger pixels equates to superior light-gathering capabilities and unprecedented low-light performance – something that is reflected in the Alpha 7S II's sensitivity range.

Like the original Alpha 7S, the Alpha 7S II has a sensitivity of ISO 100–102,400, with the option to expand it further to an astonishing ISO 50–409,600. The sensor teams up with Sony's Bionz X image processor and there's also the option to shoot in the 14-bit uncompressed raw format (also available to Alpha 7R II users via a firmware update). This is alleged to offer improved quality of tonal gradation and eliminate any compression artefacts.

In an effort to improve focusing, Sony has introduced what it calls a Fast Intelligent AF system. This shouldn't be confused with the Fast Hybrid AF system that features on the Alpha 7 II and 7R

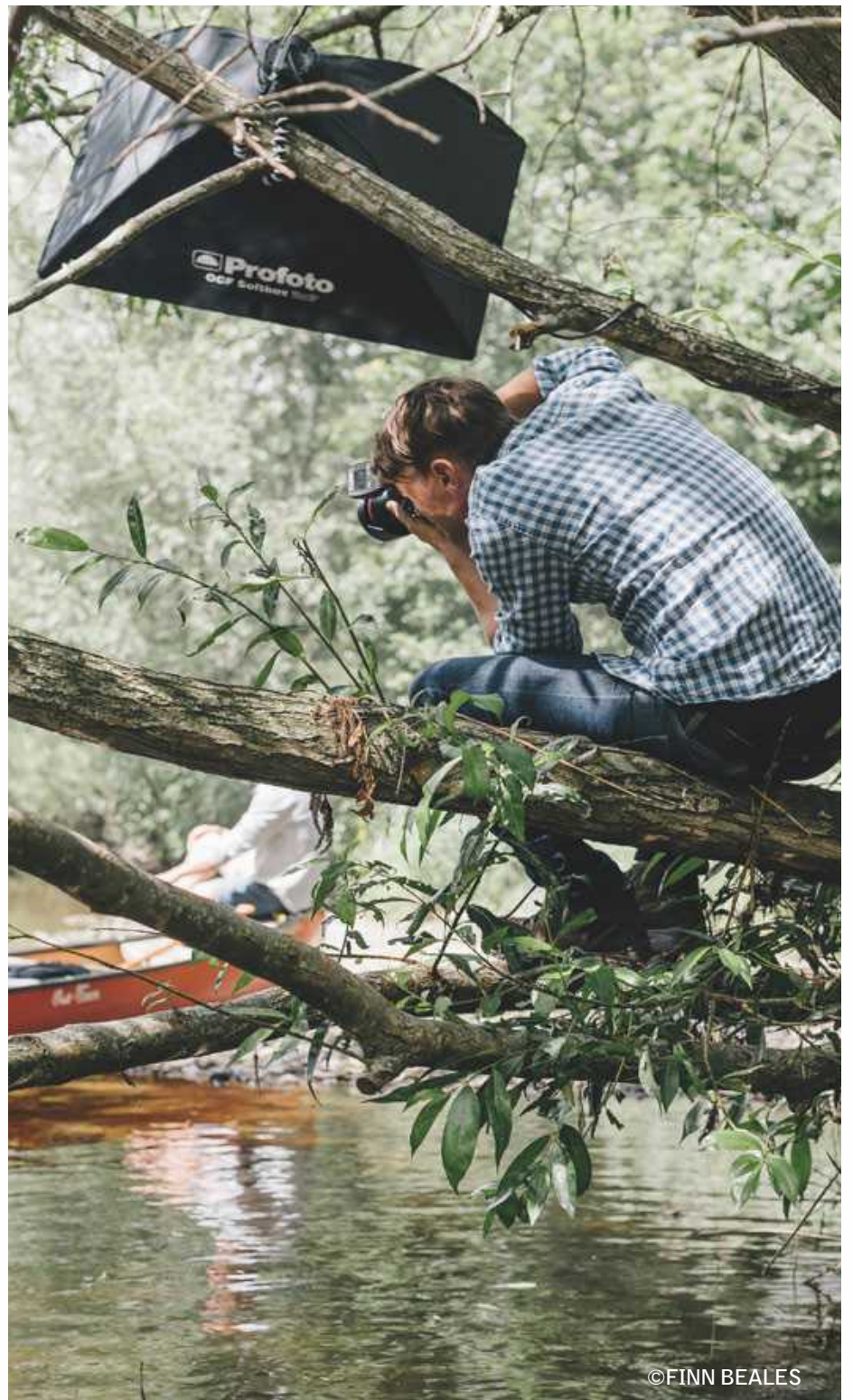
II. Instead of using on-sensor phase detection, the Alpha 7S II relies on contrast detection to acquire focus and provides 169 AF points in total. Each of the nine central points is divided into 16 segments to provide a higher concentration of AF points in the centre. With an f/2 lens attached, Sony claims it's possible to focus when light levels drop to -4EV.

Another feature that I expected to make its way into the Alpha 7S II is the 5-axis in-body image-stabilisation system that we've seen before on the Alpha 7 II and 7R II. The system compensates for the familiar pitch and yaw movements, but also corrects for movements of the camera vertically and sideways. The fifth axis corresponds to the rotational correction around the lens axis, which is crucial for video recording and ensuring high-resolution handheld images remain at their sharpest. The advantage of fitting this image-stabilisation system to the Alpha 7S II is that it allows

users to dial in a shutter speed 4.5 stops slower than would otherwise be possible. In addition, it also opens up the possibility of shooting stabilised images no matter which lens is attached – whether it be a zoom with optical stabilisation built in, or a prime lens without.

There's more on offer, too. The Alpha 7S II features a newly designed shutter that's tested to 500,000 cycles and reduces mechanical front and rear-curtain vibration. The electronic front-curtain shutter is enabled via the main menu and above it you'll find the camera's silent shooting mode. Switching this on disengages the electronic front-curtain shutter and engages the Alpha 7S II's fully electronic shutter. With silent mode deployed it's possible to shoot in silence without disturbing a subject. However, unlike some cameras with an electronic shutter, it's not possible to push the shutter speed past its 1/8,000sec maximum.





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Keeping the sensitivity set to ISO 200 in this low-light scene allowed me to test the effectiveness of the 5-axis image stabilisation



It's difficult to handhold the camera at 1/5sec without signs of handshake



Employing the IS system allows you to shoot sharp shots down to 1/5sec

➤ Another feature that's been updated is the viewfinder. The Alpha 7S II inherits the same EVF that impressed us on the Alpha 7R II, and although its 2.36-million-dot resolution suggests it's the same as that on the Alpha 7S, it has a larger 0.78x magnification.

Below the EVF there's an improvement in screen quality, too. The 3in, 1.23-million-dot display advances on the 3in, 921,000-dot display of old, offering 107° of adjustment up and 41° down when it's tilted. To keep the sensor free of imperfections, an anti-dust mechanism helps to dislodge any particles that may adhere to the sensor. There's Wi-Fi connectivity and NFC for instant pairing to compatible devices, and the micro USB interface at the side makes it possible to keep the battery topped up while you're shooting and conveniently recharge it when you're on the move. It's good to see Sony boxing its latest Alpha 7-series cameras with a pair of NP-FW50 batteries and each of these lasts for around 300 shots.

Build and handling

The Alpha 7S II follows in the footsteps of the Alpha 7 II and 7R II with a similarly revised body layout. Each generation of Alpha 7-series cameras sees ➤

Video functionality

THE ALPHA 7S II features a long list of impressive video specs, which is to be expected from a camera that will find its way into the hands of serious videographers. A key development is its ability to record 4K (3,840x2,160-pixel) movies internally rather than to an external recorder, which adds unwanted bulk to a camera set-up.

The Alpha 7S II records its 4K internally using full-frame readout without line skipping, to produce the highest-quality 4K footage possible. The XAVC S files are minimised in size using Long GOP data compression before being saved in the widely compatible MPEG-4/H.264 format.

There's more on offer too, not least the 120fps full HD recording option that's ideal for those who'd like to create 4x/5x slow-motion movies in post-production. To view some of our examples of

slow-motion recordings on the Alpha 7S II visit www.thevideomode.com/A7SII.

Advanced video functions that made their debut in the Alpha 7S are joined by even more options to ensure videographers have the very best latitude when it comes to recording and editing. The introduction of S-Log3 gamma is designed to offer better tonal reproduction from shadow to midtone (18% grey) than S-Log2 gamma and benefits from a 14-stop latitude. As well as the popular S-Gamut/S-Log2, there's also S-Gamut3.Cine to reproduce the wide colour gamut of the DCI-P3 colour space of digital cinema, with S-Gamut3 being best suited to archiving.

To complement these settings, the Alpha 7S II features a stereo headphone jack below its 3.5mm mic port, there's zebra patterning



4K and HD video footage can be recorded with a bit rate of up to 100Mbps

to reveal areas close to clipping, and focus peaking is available to aid focusing when the camera is used with manual-focus lenses. To take advantage of the XAVC S format

users will require a Class 10 or higher SDXC memory card and the camera will prompt you to use a UHS Speed Class 3 card when recording at 100Mbps.



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Joe Cornish – Smooth Cotton 300

I aim to crystallise the endlessly varied light, colours and texture of nature in my landscape photographs. At the end of a chain of photographic processes, the print is the culmination and fulfilment of that effort, and the paper is critical to the success of the print. Fotospeed's Smooth Cotton 300 is my paper of choice.



Trevor & Faye Yerbury – Natural Soft Textured Bright White 315

As traditional darkroom printers it has taken us many years to discover the right paper for our digital images that will capture and hold all of the shadow and highlight detail we demand. Natural Soft Textured Bright White is our preferred paper.



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John Swannell – Platinum Baryta 300

As a photographer I aim to capture the spirit of my subject. While technology has changed over the years the one thing I feel remains the same is the importance of the printed image. Fotospeed's Platinum Baryta bridges the gap between the traditional darkroom papers and today's digital media. I find that whilst it is known for reproducing superb B&W images it should never be underestimated as a paper for colour work.



Charlie Waite – Platinum Etching 285

Landscape photography is much about discovery and photographers can only fully relish the rewards of their efforts when seen in the form of a print. The paper used for that print has to be as carefully considered as the image made. Discovering Fotospeed's Platinum Etching 285 has been a revelation to me and has proved a vital tool in my ongoing quest to match pre-visualisation with end result.



Low-light testing revealed good response and accuracy from the AF system

the build quality and handling improve, and compared to the original Alpha 7S, the Alpha 7S II's body is slightly chunkier, presenting a larger grip to wrap more of your hand around. The grip is not only improved in terms of size, but it's better sculpted too, and by moving the shutter button and encircled on/off button forward it improves comfort when shooting stills.

Long gone are the pesky front and rear dials the Alpha 7S inherited from the NEX-7, which are replaced by slimmer dials that don't click when they're rotated. The annoying lip that made it awkward to access the recessed menu and magnify buttons has also been addressed by placing these on a 45° angle.

My main reservation with regard to the handling of the camera is the position of the movie-record button. As I mentioned when I reviewed the Alpha 7 II and 7R II, it feels awkward having to pull your thumb away from the thumb rest to start and end recording. Thankfully, this is an easy fix by assigning the movie-record function to the AEL button. It's also possible to assign it to any one of the four custom buttons around the body.

The level of control on offer for reassigning different functions to different buttons is second to none – just as it is on other Alpha 7 models. The hardest part is remembering what you assigned to which button when you return to the camera after having not used it for a while.

It's useful to have ISO assigned to the four-way controller, which takes the place of the white balance button on the original Alpha 7S. Other refinements include a softer eyecup to the

viewfinder, a locking-mode dial and a change to the way memory cards are inserted, which now slot in from the side of the body.

It's only when the Alpha 7S II is positioned alongside its forerunner that you start to appreciate the differences in terms of its finish. Sony has veered away from the smooth gloss finish of its predecessor, opting for a matt-black stealth finish instead. Other subtle details, such as its blackened hotshoe give the camera a smarter appearance, and in a similar fashion to the Alpha 7 II and 7R II, the Alpha 7S II employs top, front and rear covers made of magnesium alloy to give it a solid feel in-hand.

Despite it not being classified as weather sealed, the Alpha 7S II has dust and moisture-resistance measures in place to prevent any unwanted particles entering the body. These measures include protection around buttons and dials, as well as a double-layered structure that's designed to interlock the panels of the body tightly together. The extent to which this moisture resistance is effective is unknown, but I experienced no problems while using the camera for a prolonged spell in drizzle.

Like the Alpha 7 II and 7R II, the 7S II accepts Sony's VG-C2EM battery grip (£249). As well as providing three extra buttons for instant control over custom assign functions, it accommodates two NP-FW50 batteries to ensure you don't get caught short of power.

Performance

Venturing out on a winter's evening at dusk was a good test of the Fast Intelligent autofocus system and its ability to acquire focus in scenes with

Focal points

The Alpha 7S II is built around the same body as the 7 II and 7R II, but targets a different audience

Focus peaking

Focus peaking reveals in-focus edges on the rear display. It's a function you'll want to take advantage of when the camera is used with manual-focus lenses. It can be set up to any custom function button on the body.

Autofocus assist beam

In low-light situations the bright orange AF assist beam provides illumination to help acquire focus on a subject. The spread of light from this high-intensity beam is impressive and there's the option to switch it off altogether.

Exposure compensation

This can be adjusted by $\pm 3\text{EV}$ using the dial on the body or by up to $\pm 5\text{EV}$ when you head into the main menu or use the (Fn) button at the rear to enter the quick menu.



Robust lens mount

The strength and rigidity of the Alpha 7S II's body and lens mount has been enhanced to ensure it is up to the task of supporting large and heavy glass, such as super-telephoto lenses and those used by videographers for movie shooting.

Memory card

Unlike DSLR rivals that feature twin card slots, the Alpha 7S II has a single card slot that accepts SD, SDHC and SDXC cards. A Class 10 or higher speed rating is required for XAVC S recording and UHS Speed Class 3 is required for recording at 100Mbps.





This shot was made possible by being able to shoot comfortably at ISO 6,400

little contrast. Although it doesn't feature Sony's impressive Fast Hybrid AF system as found within the Alpha 7R II, the contrast-detection system the Alpha 7S II employs is competent at acquiring focus when the light levels drop very low. I didn't find the lock-on speed to be quite as responsive as Sony's Fast Hybrid AF system, but it's not slow or sluggish. I was half expecting it to struggle in the low-light scene I presented it with, but other than one occasion where a plume of steam engulfed the lens, it established focus on my subjects without any sign of difficulty.

Provided there's sufficient ambient light, the AF system does a good job of acquiring focus when recording video too. Hitting the movie-record button and focusing between near and far subjects revealed the Alpha 7S II is twice as fast as the Alpha 7S in this department. This is welcome news for videographers and answers the criticisms of its predecessor's leisurely focusing speed when recording video.

Another feature that makes the Alpha 7S II such an impressive performer in low light is its 5-axis image-stabilisation system. The effect of this is so powerful that it's clearly visible on the rear LCD or through the viewfinder when shooting stills and recording video. It's particularly effective with the latter, turning what would otherwise be shaky handheld movie footage into smooth video that looks like it could have been captured with the camera mounted to a tripod.

In low-light scenes I had no trouble capturing sharp images of static subjects with 1/10sec shutter speed at 70mm. Taking the test further, I dialled in shutter speeds of 1/8sec and 1/5sec and continued to record sharp shots at

the same focal length provided the EVF was braced against my eye. It was only when I reduced the shutter speed to 1/4sec and 1/3sec that I couldn't prevent camera shake creeping into my images.

The camera excels with regard to its video performance, too. The new S-Log3 profile is a hand-me-down from Sony's high-end camcorders and allows users to colour grade video to the same standard while preserving consistency between footage captured on different Sony cameras.

In the past, the camera's Log settings have displayed a rather flat and murky feed, but to get around this Sony has added a gamma display assist function, where a filter is applied to the image displayed on-screen so you can view images with natural contrast while recording. I found this particularly helpful when monitoring images and checking focus.

Those who want to shoot slow-motion video at 120fps in full HD should also note that the sensor crops the image by 2.2x in this mode, but the results are spectacular. In other areas, the metering system produces accurate exposures and I used the zebra-pattern function regularly to ensure highlight detail was never lost. The viewfinder's colour is a little undersaturated when you compare it to the scene as viewed by your eyes, but it does refresh quickly and it's great to be able to raise the camera to your eye to inspect images and video in high-contrast conditions.

The Alpha 7S II does use its power quickly, though. With this in mind, you'll want to build up a collection of spare batteries to swap over at a moment's notice or look at an alternative solution – the Atomos Power Station being a good example.

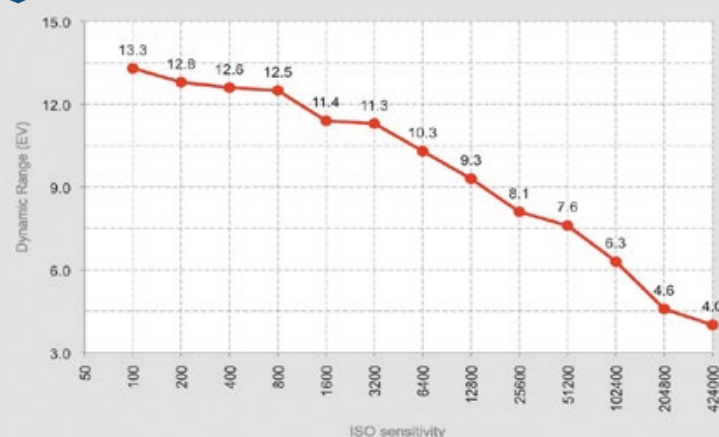


Lab results

Andrew Sydenham's lab tests reveal just how the camera performs

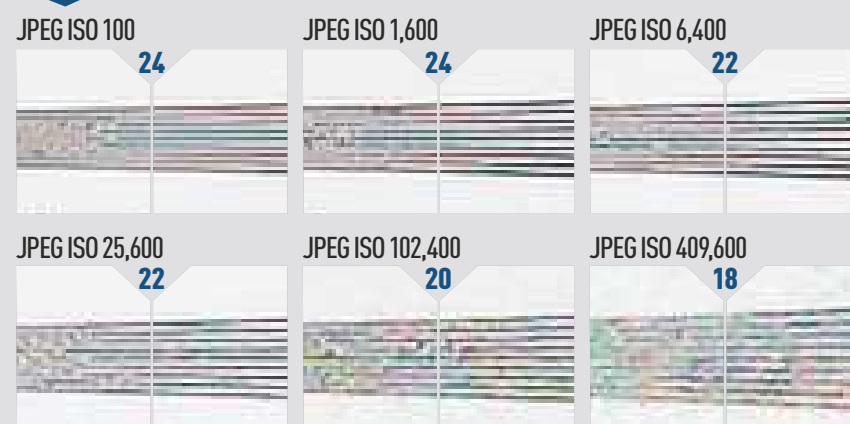
The big appeal for still photographers is the Sony Alpha 7S II's extensive ISO range. Those curious of how well the 7S II performs at its high sensitivity settings will be astonished by the sensor's capabilities and by how far the sensitivity can be pushed. As the opening shot to this review shows, it's possible to achieve acceptable results right up to ISO 25,600. There are signs of luminance noise and colour noise when you push the sensor to its extremes by entering its expanded settings, but provided you're vigilant and apply noise reduction carefully in post-production, it's possible to shoot at the 'mid-range' of ISO 6,400, 12,800 and 25,600 comfortably. Although the Alpha 7S II's sensor has nothing on that of the 7R II when it comes to the level of detail it resolves, our resolution results reveal the amount of detail that is resolved remains fairly consistent throughout the ISO range.

Dynamic range



At its lowest native sensitivity setting, our dynamic range figures measured a highly impressive 13.3EV at ISO 100 – a similar readout to the 13.1EV figure recorded by the Alpha 7R II at the same sensitivity. As our dynamic range graph shows, the figures remain above 12EV up to ISO 800, dipping to 11.4EV at ISO 1,600. Pushing past ISO 1,600, results drop to 10.3EV and 9.3EV at ISO 6,400 and ISO 12,800 respectively. Shadow tones gradually get noisier when more is asked of the sensor, but figures remain above 6EV up to ISO 102,400, indicating there's great scope when it comes to pulling back shadow detail.

Resolution



Unlike the Alpha 7R II, the 7S II employs an optical low-pass filter. Inspecting raw files under close scrutiny indicates the 12MP chip resolves a maximum of 2,400lp/ph at ISO 100. While this is a long way from the level of detail we're used to seeing high-resolution full-frame sensors resolve, it's on a par with the original Alpha 7S. It attains the 2,400lp/ph figure up to ISO 3,200, dropping only slightly to 2,200lp/ph at ISO 6,400. The sensor maintains an impressive level of detail right up to ISO 25,600, ending up at 1,800lp/ph at its ISO ceiling.

Noise

Both raw and JPEG images taken from our diorama scene are captured at the full range of ISO settings. The camera is placed in its default setting for JPEG images. Raw images are sharpened and noise reduction applied, to strike the best balance between resolution and noise.



JPEG ISO 100



JPEG ISO 1,600



JPEG ISO 6,400



JPEG ISO 25,600



JPEG ISO 102,400



JPEG ISO 409,600



Converting our raw files using Adobe DNG Converter v9.2 and inspecting them closely at 100% enabled us to establish how well the camera performs through its ISO range. Images are very clean from ISO 100-1,600 and it's only when you push up to ISO 3,200 that luminance noise creeps in. You'll be hard pushed to notice this luminance noise at ISO 3,200 and ISO 6,400 unless you inspect the shadows in your images incredibly closely, and I found it possible to create clean results at these settings by increasing the luminance-noise-reduction slider to a value of 30 in Lightroom. Pushing up to ISO 12,800 and ISO 25,600 introduces more luminance noise, yet detail and texture remain high at both these settings. Users could turn to ISO 51,200 if needs must, but fine texture and detail do get lost. ISO 102,400, 204,800 and 409,600 sound impressive but they're best avoided.

The competition



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4R

Sensor: 16.05MP, Micro Four Thirds MOS sensor

ISO: 100-25,600

Price: £1,200 (body only)

This video-enhanced version of the Lumix GH4 features unlimited 4K recording and V-Log L to capture up to 12 stops of dynamic range. Movies can be recorded at 200Mbps (ALL-Intra) or 100Mbps (IPB) bit rate.



Canon XC10

Sensor: 12MP, 1in CMOS sensor

ISO: 160-20,000

Price: £1,530

The Canon XC10 is a lightweight video and stills camera capable of recording 4K footage at up to 305Mbps. It's fitted with a 10x optical zoom lens that's optically stabilised and records its 4K video internally to a CFast 2.0 card.



Sony Alpha 7R II

Sensor: 42.4MP full-frame Exmor R CMOS

ISO: 50-102,400 (expanded)

Price: £2,600 (body only)

Like the Alpha 7S II, the 7R II shoots 4K video internally. It features a class-leading 42.4MP back-illuminated CMOS sensor, a Fast Hybrid AF system comprising 399 phase detection AF points and 5-axis image stabilisation.

Our verdict

ALTHOUGH the refinements that have been made to the Alpha 7S II might not appear to be as revolutionary as those on the 7R II, it has come on a long way from the original 7S. The introduction of the 5-axis stabilisation transforms handheld shooting to the extent that it's possible to shoot sharp still images at as slow as 1/4sec and record extremely smooth video footage without always having to rely on a tripod. Videographers will like the improved autofocus speeds when shooting movies, but it's the ability to reduce the size and weight of a set-up by recording 4K internally and apply professional-grade profiles for greater latitude when editing that will impress most. Video quality is very impressive and the ability to record at up to 120fps is the cherry on the cake for those wishing to create slow-motion footage.

By opting for fewer and larger pixels, Sony has created a model that produces an incredibly high dynamic range and performs

remarkably at high sensitivities. Users can confidently shoot at ISO 25,600 and preserve a level of detail that makes this setting usable – something that, combined with its quiet and durable shutter, makes it a strong candidate for wedding and wildlife photographers who like to work discreetly. Sports photographers are better off looking elsewhere – the 5fps burst and contrast-detect autofocus don't cut it for shooting the fastest action.

If you're into video in a big way, want a camera that performs exceptionally well in low light and one that handles significantly better than the original, then the Alpha 7S II delivers the goods. It's not without its pitfalls – battery stamina and a convoluted menu system being the main two. It gives those who've already invested in the Alpha 7 series another option, but it's fair to say the Alpha 7S II is a fairly niche camera so its appeal will be somewhat more limited than the Alpha 7 II and 7R II.



FEATURES	9/10
BUILD & HANDLING	8/10
METERING	9/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	9/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	8/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10

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The 35mm focal length delivers a slightly wide view that's great for setting the scene

Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

The market wasn't exactly short of 35mm lenses before Tamron introduced the second of its new range of fixed-focal-length optics. **Damien Demolder** investigates whether we need another



Behind the standard 50mm, the 35mm lens is probably the second most common fixed focal length for full-frame camera users. Just about every camera brand makes its own, and I suspect that most photographers who want one already have one – or at least have their eye on one. There's a range of maximum apertures to choose from and optics provided in just about every mount in existence. Tamron's other new fixed focal length, the SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD, stands out because it offers a slightly alternative angle of view to those available elsewhere, so it

naturally finds itself in a unique position and almost without direct competition. This 35mm f/1.8 model, though, sits in an already busy market and will have to rely on other charms to gain the attentions of well-distracted wallets. I suppose that if Tamron wants to make a serious go of having a proper range of general-purpose fixed-focal-length lenses to sit alongside its extensive collection of zooms, the company needs to have a 35mm in its offering. However, the question is whether this is just a lens to tick a box in that range, or if it indeed offers something more we should all pay attention to.

Features

The Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD is suitable for use on both full-frame and APS-C-sensor cameras, providing a standard-type focal-length appearance for cropped-sensor users and a moderate wideangle for those with full-frame cameras. The lens uses ten elements in nine groups, and includes two glass moulded aspherical lenses, one element made from low dispersion (LD) glass and a further two made with extra low dispersion (XLD) glass. The aspherical elements are there to ensure that focus is maintained

The lens is clearly designed to be used at wider apertures – it's nicely sharp even at f/1.8

'The AF feels pretty quick thanks to the USD motor'

to reduce flare, while fluorine coatings on the front element are designed to repel water and fingerprints so it can be kept clean. Also of note is the weather proofing of the lens, with seals around the mount and the joins that allow users to carry on shooting in the rain.

Handling

Like Tamron's 45mm lens in the same series, this 35mm is pretty big and heavy when compared to the average models of its focal length and aperture. I used it on the Canon EOS-1D X and it looked perfectly at home working with a body equally bulky and bulbous.

Weight doesn't always equate to good build, but this lens really does feel very well made and as though it'll endure the knocks and bumps of life without dramatic effects.

The external design of the barrel is really rather nice, with the company mixing a soft-sheen black paint with the fine ribbed rubber of the focusing ring. The focusing ring is easy to find should you need it, and the AF/MF and VC switches are well positioned for the thumb of the left hand. These switches are hard to knock accidentally, even though they sit proud of the barrel so they can be found easily.

The lens looks good, feels good and is very nice to use.

Performance

Having been impressed with the performance of the Tamron 45mm f/1.8 lens, I was rather hoping for great things from this other model in the series. I was especially looking for good wide aperture performance, as this gives us the creative freedom to use whichever apertures we need to create the effects we want to achieve. Inevitably, the widest apertures are not the best the lens has to offer, but they are still

Detail



across the flat surface of the sensor, and to reduce the blurry rotation effect that sometimes occurs due to sagittal coma aberrations. The aspheric glasses should also help to prevent barrelling and pincushion distortion – so straight lines close to the edges of the frame should remain unbent.

Tamron's LD and XLD glasses intend to reduce the chromatic faults that see coloured highlights appearing around high-contrast edges. That three of these elements are in use suggests the company wants to produce a lens that can be used effectively at large apertures.

Like the 45mm that we reviewed in AP 21 November, this 35mm model uses a nine-bladed iris, which will help to create attractive circular out-of-focus highlights that don't have hard-angled edges to draw attention away from the subject.

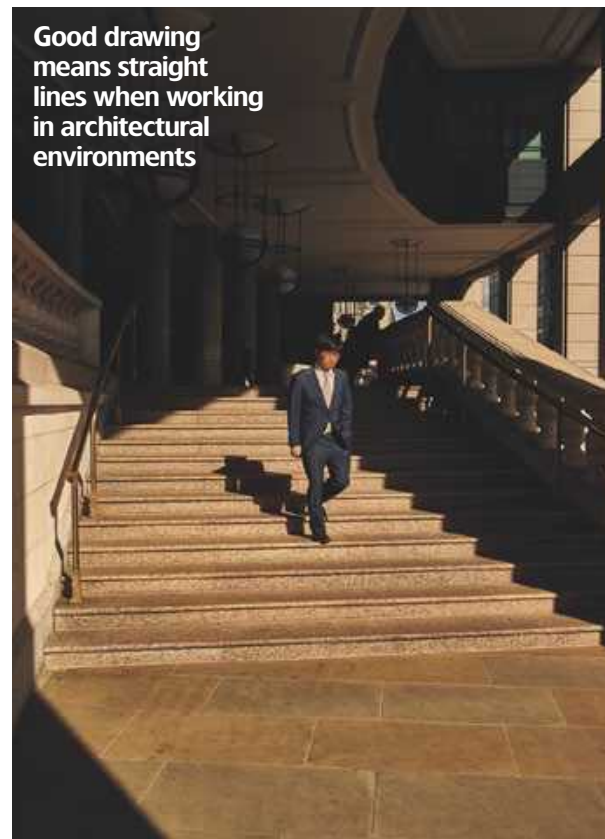
It's quite unusual to have image stabilisation

in a wideangle lens, as traditional thinking says that the lower magnification means there's less impact from camera shake. As sensor resolutions increase, however, the effects of a moving camera become much more obvious, because we can enlarge our images so much more – so all stabilisation help should be gladly accepted. I also enjoyed the ability to use the lens at what would otherwise have been 'dangerous' shutter speeds, so that I didn't have to crank up the ISO so much in low-light conditions.

Another unusual feature of the Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD is its closest focusing distance. Canon and Nikon equivalent lenses can focus to 24-29cm, but this model gets as close as 20cm.

Tamron uses its eBAND (Extended Bandwidth and Angular-Dependency) and BBAR (Broad-Band Anti-Reflection) coatings

Good drawing means straight lines when working in architectural environments





Out-of-focus detail remains soft and non-distracting, with pleasingly round highlights at f/3.5

very good and more than usable. There is quite a resolution jump between f/1.8 and f/2.8, from which point the corners begin to catch up with the centre. Sharpness across the frame is most uniform at f/8, but already ultimate resolution has begun to fade slightly at that point. The lens is best at the wider end of the mid-range, so f/4–f/5.6, and is better in the centre at f/1.8 than it is at f/11.

The AF feels pretty quick thanks to the USD motor, but I felt the reactions weren't quite perfect with very fast-moving subjects, although for most normal shooting occasions it will be more than good enough.

I was pleased with the mostly well-controlled chromatic aberration, with nice clean high-contrast edges and no purple fringing to speak of even close to the corners of the frame. That isn't to say there is no chromatic colouration, but that which exists comes out in the wash with no after-effects via the automatic correction in most software packages.

Drawing is good enough that architecture can be photographed without buildings appearing to bow at the edges, and while there is a decent amount of darkening in the corners at the widest aperture settings it disappears from obvious view by f/4.

I have been impressed by the flare performance of the lens, so the company's coating strategy seems to work rather well. Shooting with a patch of sun shining around a corner in one instance, the flare was contained within the small section of the image in which the light appears, and with no obvious impact of the rest of the picture. Contrast in the other areas of the frame looks quite normal, suggesting that internal reflections have been contained and reduced very quickly.

Rendition of out-of-focus areas is very pleasant, with sparkling glass, metal and water forming nice rounded highlights with soft edges. This creates a smooth background that's free of optical distractions so the attention is allowed to stay more easily on the focused subject.

Our verdict

THE TAMRON SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD is a big and heavy lens, but it produces quality images. We make choices that often come down to quality against convenience, and in this case we're looking at a lens that aims for clean images at the cost of size.

This is a crowded market, so it makes perfect sense that Tamron has tried to differentiate its 35mm lens from the others available. I was pleased to have image stabilisation on my side as I like to shoot handheld in low light, and I was delighted to be able to shoot at f/1.8 without suffering a huge penalty. While quality is definitely better at f/4 and f/5.6, at f/1.8 and f/2 I was still very happy with the results.

All in all this is a very good lens. Tamron hasn't just made a me-too product, but has brought something new to the moderate wideangle sector. The unique features make it stand out, and those shooting general or documentary-style work will welcome the emphasis on image quality at wide apertures. I'm impressed.



Data file

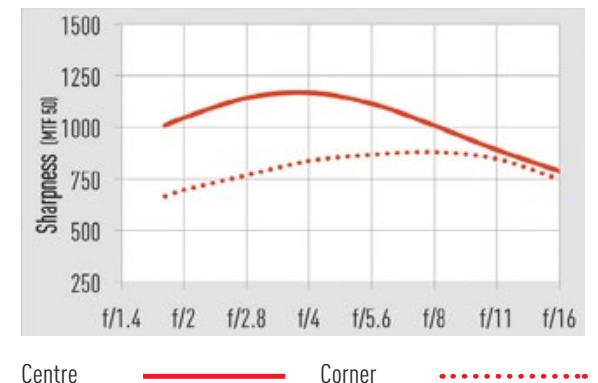
Price £580
Lens mount Canon, Nikon, Sony Alpha
Filter thread 67mm
Lens elements 10
Groups 9
Aperture blades 9
Max aperture f/1.8
Min aperture f/16
Minimum focus distance 20cm
Size 78.3x80.4mm
Weight 450g

Amateur Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
 ★★★★★

Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

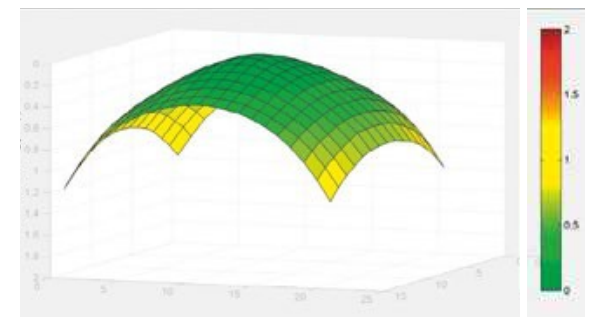
Resolution

You can see from the graph below that this lens keeps its best performance for wider apertures, making it ideal for handheld shooting. Our Applied Imaging tests reveal very impressive results in the centre – remarkably it's as sharp wide open as it is at f/8. The corners aren't quite as sharp, but that's expected from a 35mm prime. The very best results overall are seen from f/4 to f/11.



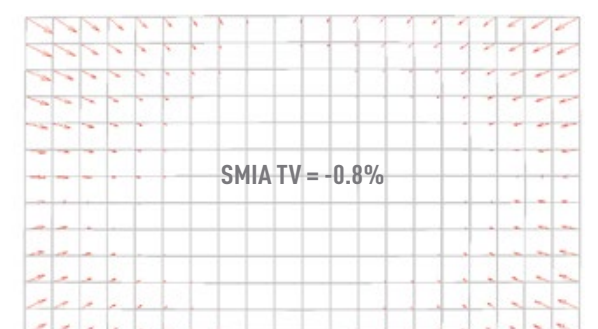
Shading

Some darkening of the corners is definitely noticeable at f/1.8, but it's not excessive. The fall-off profile is also rather gradual, which makes it relatively unobjectionable in most shots. The level of vignetting fades quickly on stopping down, and is almost non-existent by f/4 for non-technical applications. Overall, this is a good performance.



Curvilinear distortion

As you can see below, distortion is low, with only slight curvature of lines that should be straight. This barrelling will likely be most noticeable in close-up subjects of a particularly square nature that sit close to the edges of the frame, but in most cases distortion doesn't play much of a role.



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● EXPERT ADVICE ● TIPS ● TRICKS ● HACKS ● KNOW-HOW

Rolling-shutter effects

Q Being fairly new to digital photography, I've been thinking about the way my camera works and in particular how long it takes to acquire a 1/4000sec exposure. My camera, a Nikon D750, has two sync speeds of 1/200sec and 1/250sec that I can choose to use, but whatever the selection at that shutter speed the instant the front curtain fully opens the rear curtain begins to close. At any shutter speed faster than this the rear curtain begins to close before the front curtain has fully opened. This creates a 'slot' that travels down the face of the sensor.

Suppose I set my sync speed at 1/200sec. This will become the fastest time the whole sensor is exposed in one go to the image from the lens. If I want to take a picture faster than this, at say 1/4000sec, a 'slot' travels down the sensor exposing it a bit at a time. But how long does this take? I assume from my flash sync speed this is 1/200sec. Is this right or have I misinterpreted the way the camera works?

If I am right, this poses another question. Suppose I want to take a picture of a fast-moving car travelling across my field of view, from left to right, at a speed of 150mph, and I set my camera to snap this vehicle when it passes a given point at 1/4000sec? The car at that point will be



A skewed image due to the rolling-shutter effect

moving at 220 feet per second, which means in 1/200sec it will have travelled 1.1ft. When I begin my exposure, and supposing I could completely fill the frame with the image of the car, the bottom of the car will be at one position but the time the exposure is completed the top of the car has moved on. Will I get a distorted image?

Martin Blatt

A Broadly speaking, your thinking is correct, although with a couple of caveats. First, your camera's actual sync speed is 1/250sec – the 1/200sec option is for use with strobes that are unable to trigger and fire quite as fast as the camera needs.

A sync speed of 1/250sec means that the

shutter curtain takes that long to fully traverse the height of the sensor. To produce a 1/4000sec exposure, the second curtain is triggered 1/4000sec after the first, and follows it across the sensor, exposing a narrow slit. This means that the top and bottom parts of the sensor are exposed at fractionally different times. If you shoot a fast-moving subject in the way that you suggest, it will move during the exposure, and the image will be distorted, and skewed slightly from top to bottom. This is known as a rolling-shutter effect.

However, the kind of image distortion you're describing is rarely seen in practice. This is because, on the whole, people don't shoot in this way. Instead, when shooting a subject moving quickly across the frame, they usually pan to follow the motion. This means that the camera's movement cancels out the possible image distortion.

One area where rolling-shutter effects can be seen more often, though, is when shooting with cameras that have an electronic shutter option. These tend to take longer to complete the exposure – often around 1/60sec – which means any movement of the camera or subject can result in distortion (as illustrated above). The same effect can also give rise to image distortion during movie recording.

Andy Westlake

Formats for archiving

Q I intend to archive my old 35mm black & white negatives and colour slides by copying them with my DSLR. I'm using a Nikon D7100 with a reversing ring and a 50mm f/1.8D lens, together with a custom-built slide/negative holder. Can you advise me on what file format I should use to record black & white negatives (raw, large, medium or small JPEGs) and what format should I use for recording the colour slides?

Phillip Salter

A Copying negatives and slides using a DSLR can be a tricky business, due to the high-contrast range of the

film. This means you'll always be better off shooting raw format, which will allow you to capture the maximum possible information.

To make the best use of this, though, you'll also need to take care of exposure, making sure you don't overexpose and lose highlight detail, or underexpose and block up shadows.

Once you have raw files, you'll then need to develop them to give JPEG images. The usual advantages of raw apply – you'll be able to adjust white balance to get correct colours, and adjust the tonality of the image to best reflect how you want it to look. The shadows and highlights sliders in your raw conversion

software tend to be particularly useful here.

Andy Westlake

Value of old cameras

Q I have a number of old/antique cameras and want to offload them. Could you suggest an individual or a company that might give me a valuation for them and/or be interested in purchasing them?

Stephen Brown.

A I'm afraid that old cameras aren't necessarily worth very much just because they're old. Instead, they need to be rare or of high quality to have much value. I'd suggest the first thing to

do would be to establish whether you have anything of sufficient value. The easiest way to do this is to search for each model on eBay (www.ebay.co.uk), showing only 'Completed listings' or 'Sold listings'. You'll probably have to create an eBay account to do so.

If you find that you have anything especially interesting or valuable, you could contact dealers that advertise in the back of AP, such as Fforges Photographic (www.ffforges.com), Mifsuds (www.mifsuds.com), Peter Loy (www.peterloy.com) or Camtech (www.camtechuk.com) to see if any of these companies would like to take them off your hands.

Andy Westlake

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Rounds and dates

Below is a list of the competition rounds, their themes and the dates you need to know. To view the results, visit www.thevideomode.com. When planning your entry, take into consideration the criteria of fulfilling the brief, creativity and technical excellence on which you'll be judged.

Theme	Opens	Closes
Round One: Nature	1 Aug	30 Sep
Round Two: Time	1 Oct	31 Dec
Round Three: Love	1 Jan	28 Feb

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My space



Richard Tuschman takes us on a tour of the New York studio he uses for shooting his elaborate dioramas



© RICHARD TUSCHMAN

Tabletop still-life area

1 This is the tabletop still-life area where I shoot the dioramas that are the stage sets for my images. I currently shoot with a Canon EOS 7D on a Manfrotto 3030 tripod. I shoot the dioramas with a Sigma 30mm f/1.4 prime lens, which gives the perspective I like, and matches up nicely in the final composite with the human models shot with a Sigma 50mm f/2.8 lens, both against seamless grey background paper.

Nissin Di866 Mark II Speedlite

2 I most often use this Nissin Di866 Mark II Speedlite mounted on a Linco light stand as the key light for shooting dioramas. I sync it with an extra long 25ft [7.6m] sync cord, which allows me to adjust the power on the camera display. I often shape the light with Rogue modifiers, my favourite being the swappable grids, or sometimes I'll diffuse the light by hanging a piece of tissue paper in front of it.

Employee restroom

3 This is the 'employee restroom' for my two feline assistants. I find that arranging amenities like this on-site facilitates minimal disruption to the workflow, and allows the staff to immediately return to lounging around after taking care of business.



Work table

4 I made this worktable from a simple mail-order kit, and this is where I build and paint the dioramas that are the sets for my photographs. It's small but sturdy, and provides good and necessary storage – which is a must for any New York City studio, where space is at a premium. The pegboard on the wall allows me easy access to tools and additional shelf space.

Yongnuo YN 560 Speedlite

5 I use this Yongnuo YN 560 Speedlite, mounted on a Linco light stand, mostly as a fill light for shooting both dioramas and live models. I trigger it in slave mode from the Nissin Speedlite, and most often bounce it off the ceiling or a wall. It was extremely inexpensive, I think around \$60, but has functioned pretty flawlessly for the past three years.

Computer workstation

6 Just out of view is my computer workstation, where I do all my post-processing and compile the various aspects of the dioramas. It consists of an Apple MacBook Pro with external LaCie 324 LCD monitor, and a Wacom Intuos4 tablet and stylus. Next to that I have an Epson Stylus Photo R3000 inkjet printer and an Epson Perfection 4870 Photo flatbed scanner.

Richard Tuschman is a commercial photographer who creates images for book covers, magazines and advertising, as well as gallery exhibitions. To see examples of his work visit www.richardtuschman.com



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Ivor Matanle recalls the first SLR he ever owned

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MY FIRST SLR was a Praktica IV with 50mm f/2.8 Meyer Domiplan and 100mm f/2.8 Meyer Trioplan lenses. I bought it from AP advertiser Paul Fraser in 1964. Based on and developed from the Praktica FX of 1952, the Praktica IV had a fixed pentaprism viewfinder and plain ground glass, without focusing aids. The shutter provided speeds from 1-1/1000sec on a single dial, but with a separate slow-speeds-setting knob. The camera could be wound with a knob on the top-plate, or with a lever on the base. The lens was interchangeable, with an M42 screw mount and automatic diaphragm operated by a pin pushed by a plate in the lens throat when the shutter was fired.

The camera illustrated below is a late second-version Praktica IV, made from 1960-1964, with the rewind knob that could be converted to a crank. The first version, made by KW from 1959-1960, had a black Bakelite front to the pentaprism.

What's good A tough mechanism that is usually reliable, even when old.

What's bad You need good eyes to read the speed dial.



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Professor Newman on...

The camera name game

The brand name that appears on your lens may not be the original manufacturer

OEM stands for 'original equipment manufacturer', a somewhat confusing term used in manufacturing, which means that the company whose brand name appears on a product may not be the 'original equipment manufacturer'. Strictly, the term should be used to denote sub-assemblies, for instance shutter units, bought in from another manufacturer, but frequently nowadays it's the whole unit.

Quite often, I see the term OEM used with the reverse meaning, to denote a lens made by the 'original equipment manufacturer' of a camera. In this case, for example, a Nikkor lens for a Nikon would be an OEM lens, while a Tamron would be an 'aftermarket' or independent lens. This use of the term is incorrect in terms of the original coining of the phrase, but it's very common. To add to the confusion, OEM sourcing is fairly widespread, so it is quite possible that the OEM Nikkor was actually manufactured by Tamron, which is the 'original equipment manufacturer'.

The complexity of modern manufacturing arrangements has been highlighted by some recent discoveries surrounding the

'The complexity of manufacturing is highlighted by Sony and Zeiss'

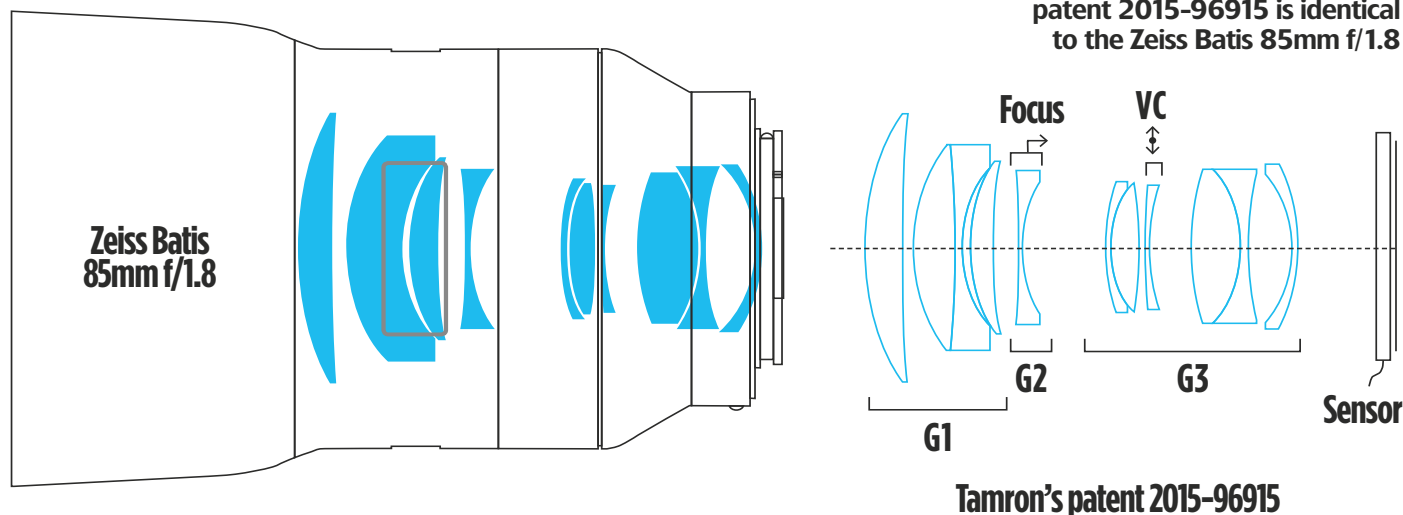
complex relationship between Sony and Zeiss, originating from the days when Sony was an electrical company producing camcorders and digital compact cameras. In those days, all Sony products had lenses branded 'Zeiss'. Sony certainly possessed its own lens plants, with Zeiss expertise helping it to develop the manufacturing capability. We know this because in 2012 Sony announced that it was closing its Minokamo lens plant and transferring production to factories in Kohida and Kisarazu. The announcement never said who owns those factories.

Meanwhile, a look at the corporate website for Konica Minolta (www.konicaminolta.com/opt/products/reflex/index.html) reveals that this company still makes interchangeable lenses for DSLRs and mirrorless cameras (although Konica Minolta never produced a mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera). Clearly, Konica Minolta is still in the OEM lens business, and the most

likely customer is Sony.

Earlier this year, Zeiss released an interesting blog concerning its relationship with Sony. Zeiss says: 'Sony/Zeiss lenses are jointly developed by Zeiss and Sony. Zeiss supports Sony throughout the optical design and development process, and then tests and approves the prototypes. Finally, Zeiss determines the test specifications for serial production... Sony/Zeiss lenses are manufactured by Sony in factories across Asia.'

More recently, Zeiss has released its own Batis range of lenses for Sony FE-mount cameras. These lenses have no link to Sony, as Zeiss emphasises in its blog, but that doesn't mean they aren't an OEM product. Recently, a Japanese patent was discovered (number 2015-96915) revealing the inner workings of a lens, which had precisely the same optical formula as the Batis 85mm f/1.8. It is inconceivable that two separately developed lenses would arrive at precisely the same formula, and in this case Tamron is clearly claiming the intellectual property rights. The precise relationship between the two companies is not clear, but it's likely there's been some close collaboration between them.



Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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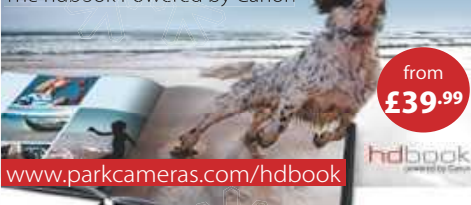
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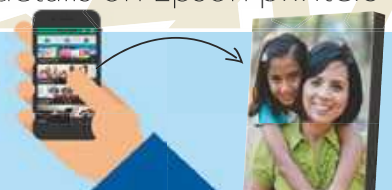
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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D7100 Body
★★★★★ 'Quality bit of kit! Love it!' Fang! - Warwickshire



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6.0 fps
1080p movie mode

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11.0 fps
Full Frame CMOS Sensor

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D4s Body **£4449**

CUSTOMER REVIEW: D4s Body
★★★★★ 'Spectacular Camera' Charlie Delta - Hertfordshire

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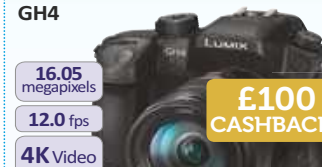
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12.0 fps
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Sony 28-75mm f2.8 SAM £569
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Panasonic




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£549
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1080p movie mode

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Pentax* offer ends 16.1.16

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7.0 fps

FREE lens*

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1080p movie mode

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 70D + 18-135mm IS STM
★★★★★ ‘An excellent step up’
Adam – Portsmouth

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Full Frame CMOS sensor

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when bought with selected lenses

5D Mark III Body £2249

5D Mark III Body £2249

CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 5D Mk III Digital SLR Camera
★★★★★ ‘You haven’t got one? Get one!’
Roland – Northampton

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18.1 megapixels
12.0 fps
Full Frame CMOS sensor

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1Dx Body £4399

CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 1D X Digital SLR Camera Body
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18-105mm AF-S DX f3.5-5.6 G ED VR	£195
18-140mm f3.5-5.6 G ED AF-S DX VR	£429
18-200mm f3.5-5.6 G ED AF-S DX VR II	£549
18-300mm f3.5-5.6 ED AF-S VR	£669
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24-85mm f3.5-4.5 AF-S G ED VR	£346
24-120mm f4 G AF-S ED VR	£729
28-300mm f3.5-5.6 G ED AF-S VR	£655
55-200mm f4.0-5.6 G AF-S ED DX VR II	£254
55-300mm f4.5-5.6 G AF-S DX VR	£269
70-200mm f2.8G ED AF-S VR II	£1579
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24mm f1.4 DG HSM A	£669
150-600mm f5-6.3 C DG OS HSM	£849
24-35mm f2 DG HSM A	£799

SIGMA

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35mm f1.4 DG HSM	£636
50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM	£319
70mm f2.8 EX DG Macro	£351
85mm f1.4 EX DG HSM	£649
105mm f2.8 APO EX DG OS HSM Macro	£379
150mm f2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro	£668
8-16mm f4.5-5.6 DC HSM	£529
10-20mm f3.5 EX DC HSM	£379
12-24mm f4.5-5.6 EX DG HSM II	£569.97
17-70mm f2.8-4.0 DC OS HSM	£329
18-200mm f3.5-6.3 DC OS HSM II	£239

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16-300mm f3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD Macro	£399
18-270mm f3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD	£269
24-70mm f2.8 Di VC USD SP	£679
28-300mm f3.5-6.3 Di VC PZD	£529
70-200mm f2.8 Di VC USD	£929
150-600mm f5-6.3 SP Di VC USD	£799
18-200mm f3.5-6.3 Di II VC	£169

Canon winter Cashback* offer ends 13.1.16
Sigma Cashback* offer ends 31.1.16

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BP 350 AW	£257
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Photo Sport BP:	
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Anvil Super	£189.99
Anvil Pro	£209.99



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Digital	£109
Small	£139
Large	£154
Pro Original	£169

Computing



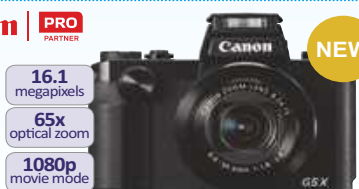
PIXMA Pro 100S	£375
PIXMA Pro 10S	£529
PIXMA Pro 1	£629



NEW Datacolor Spyder 5 Pro	£125
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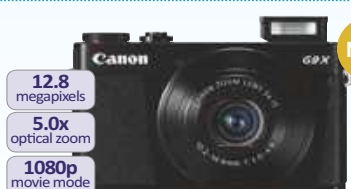
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PowerShot G9 X
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PowerShot SX610 HS	£139
PowerShot D30	£194
PowerShot S120	£200
PowerShot SX530 HS	£224
PowerShot SX710 HS	£209
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PowerShot SX60 HS	£299
PowerShot G1 X Mark II	£469

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Canon Cashback* offer ends 13.1.16



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Red or Black	£152
Ricoh GR II	
16.2 Megapixel with fixed f2.8 GR lens	£529



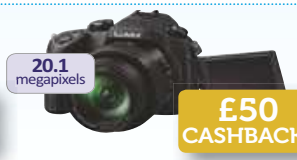
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Lumix LX100 £539
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Lumix TZ60 £219
£179 Inc. £40 Cashback*



Lumix DMC-FZ1000 £599
£549 Inc. £50 Cashback*

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Lumix TZ57	£159
Lumix TZ70	£265
Lumix FZ200	£298

Panasonic Cashback* offer ends 25.1.16



Stylus TG-4	£282
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Stylus SP-100EE	£225
Stylus Tough TG-860 Black, Silver & White	£199
Stylus 1s	£379



Black or Silver



FinePix X100T £815

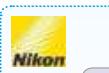


FinePix X30 £284

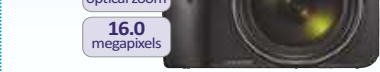
FinePix S9200	£169
FinePix S1	£279
FinePix S9800	£178.99
FinePix XP80 Purple and Black	£127
XQ2 Silver and Black	£249



Cyber-Shot RX10 II	£1169
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Cyber-Shot RX100 IV	£815
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AF-S Nikkor 24-70mm F2.8E ED VR

NEW

Quick specs

Focal length 24-70 mm
Image stab. Yes (4 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F2.8
Min aperture F22.0
Min focus 0.38 m (14.96)
Max magnification 0.27x
Weight 1070 g (2.36 lb)



IN STOCK



AF-S Nikkor 24mm F1.8G ED

NEW

Quick specs

Lens type Prime lens
Image stab. No
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F1.8
Min aperture F16.0
Min focus 0.23 m (9.06)
Max magnification 0.2x
Weight 355 g (0.78 lb)



AF-S Nikkor 200-500mm F5.6E ED VR

NEW

Quick specs

Lens type Zoom lens
Focal length 200-500 mm
Image stab. Yes (4.5 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F5.6
Min aperture F32.0
Min focus 2.20 m (86.61)
Max magnification 0.22x
Weight 2300 g (5.07 lb)



IN STOCK



AF-S 300mm F4E PF ED VR

NEW

Quick specs

Lens type Prime lens
Focal length 300 mm
Image stab. Yes (4.5 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F4.0
Min aperture F32.0
Min focus 1.40 m (55.12)
Weight 755 g (1.66 lb)



IN STOCK



D810

Quick specs

Sensor size Full frame
Sensor type CMOS 36MP
ISO Auto, 64-12800
Lens mount Nikon F
Screen size 3.2
Screen dots 1,229,000
Min shutter speed 30 sec
Max shutter speed 1/8000 sec
Weight 980 g



£350 TRADE IN BONUS



D750

Quick specs

Sensor size Full frame
Sensor type CMOS 24MP
ISO Auto, 100-12800
Focal length mult. 1x
Screen size 3.2
Min shutter speed 30 sec
Max shutter speed 1/4000 sec
Weight 750 g



£350 TRADE IN BONUS



D5500

£50

Quick specs

Sensor size APS-C
Sensor type CMOS 24MP
Lens mount Nikon F
Articulated LCD Fully articulated
Max shutter speed 1/4000 sec
Storage types SD/SDHC/SDXC



D3300

£20

Quick specs

Sensor size APS-C
Sensor type CMOS 24MP
Lens mount Nikon F
Articulated LCD Fixed
Max shutter speed 1/4000 sec
Storage types SD/SDHC/SDXC



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BG-E11 Grip **£224**

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BG-E13 Grip **£139**

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APS-C
Body only
£1298

BG-E16 Grip **£198**
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APS-C
Body only
£699

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Plus 18-135 STM **£928**
BG-E14 Grip **£125**

EOS 760D
APS-C
Body only
£647

Plus 18-135 STM **£899**

EOS 750D
APS-C
Body only
£499

Plus 18-55 STM **£549**
Plus 18-135 STM **£738**

16-35mm F4 L IS USM
£679

Full listing on website

100-400mm F4.5/5.6 LII IS USM
£1847

300mm f2.8 LII IS USM..... **£4499**

400mm f2.8 LII IS USM..... **£7399**

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£6777

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Full Frame
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£1477
Plus 24-120 f4 VR **£1997**
MBD-16 Grip **£228**

D610
Full Frame
Body only
£1099

MBD-14 Grip (D610/600) **£198**

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APS-C
Body only
£788

Plus 18-105 VR **£939**
MBD-15 Grip **£228**

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APS-C
Body only
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Plus 18-140 VR **£749**

D3300
APS-C
Body only
£289

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300mm f2.8 AFS ED VR II **£3549**

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X-T10 + 18-55mm..... £798	50-140mm F2.8 R OIS..... £1098
X-T10 body Black..... £499	55-200mm OIS XF..... £494
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14mm F2.8 XF..... £648	56mm F1.2 XF..... £728
16mm F1.4 XF..... £728	60mm F2.4 XF..... £424
16-55mm F2.8..... £744	90 F2 R LM WR..... £698
18mm F2 XF..... £349	1.4x XF TC WR..... £329
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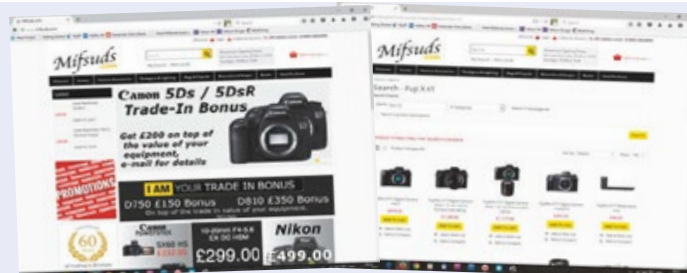
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10-20 F3.5 EX DC HSM.....	£379
10-20 F4/5.6 EX DC HSM.....	£277
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More Sigma on website

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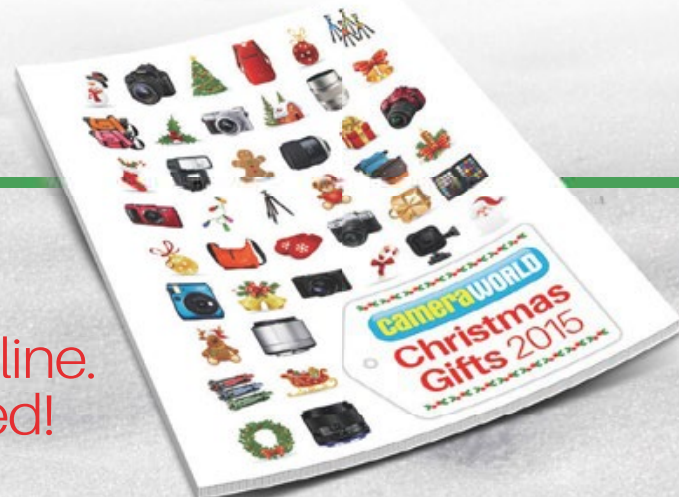
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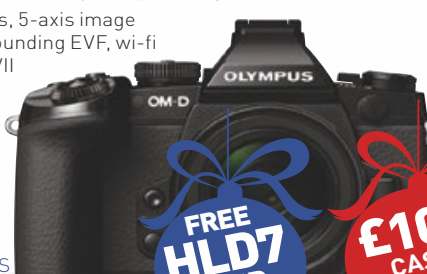
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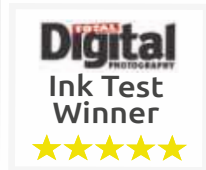
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8GB	£3.99
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Sandisk Ultra 266X (40MB/s)

8GB	£4.99
16GB	£6.99
32GB	£12.99
64GB	£24.99

Sandisk Extreme 400X (60MB/s)

16GB	£10.99
32GB	£17.99
64GB	£34.99

Sandisk Extreme Pro 633X (95MB/s)

16GB	£17.99
32GB	£23.99
64GB	£42.99
128GB	£82.99

1866X (280MB/s)

16GB	£49.99
32GB	£79.99
64GB	£129.99

Compact Flash

Lexar Professional 800X (120MB/s)

8GB	£19.99
16GB	£27.99
32GB	£36.99
64GB	£56.99

1066X (160MB/s)

16GB	£33.99
32GB	£56.99
64GB	£99.99
128GB	£192.99

Sandisk Ultra 333X (50MB/s)

8GB	£11.99
16GB	£15.99
32GB	£24.99

Sandisk Extreme 800X (120MB/s)

16GB	£26.99
32GB	£32.99
64GB	£47.99
128GB	£94.99

Sandisk Extreme Pro 1066X (160MB/s)

16GB	£33.99
32GB	£47.99
64GB	£82.99
128GB	£149.99

XQD Cards

Lexar Professional 1333X (200MB/s)

32GB	£69.99
64GB	£99.99

MicroSDHC & SDXC

Lexar Professional 633X (95MB/s)

32GB	£21.99
64GB	£43.99

Delkin Professional 375X (56MB/s)

32GB	£16.99
64GB	£32.99

Sandisk Ultra 320X (48MB/s)

16GB	£6.99
32GB	£12.99
64GB	£24.99

Readers & Cases

Lexar USB3 Card Reader £22.99

Lexar HR1 Workflow Hub £49.99

Delkin USB2 Card Reader £9.99

Delkin USB3 Card Reader £19.99

Delkin SD Card (x8) Case £6.99

Delkin CF Card (x4) Case £6.99

Batteries

Replacement rechargeable Li-ion batteries, manufactured by Hahnel or Blumax. All come with a two-year guarantee.

NB-2L/LH for Canon £9.99

NB-4L for Canon £9.99

NB-5L for Canon £9.99

NB-6L for Canon £9.99

NB-7L for Canon £9.99

NB-9L for Canon £9.99

NB-10L for Canon £12.99

NB-11L for Canon £12.99

BP-511 for Canon £12.99

LP-E5 for Canon £9.99

LP-E6 for Canon £16.99

LP-E8 for Canon £12.99

LP-E10 for Canon £12.99

LP-E12 for Canon £12.99

NP45 for Fuji £9.99

NP50 for Fuji £9.99

NP95 for Fuji £9.99

NPW126 for Fuji £12.99

NP400 for Fuji £12.99

EN-EL3E for Nikon £14.99

EN-EL5 for Nikon £9.99

EN-EL9 for Nikon £12.99

EN-EL10 for Nikon £9.99

EN-EL11 for Nikon £9.99

EN-EL12 for Nikon £9.99

EN-EL14 for Nikon £19.99

EN-EL15 for Nikon £24.99

EN-EL19 for Nikon £12.99

EN-EL20 for Nikon £12.99

EN-EL21 for Nikon £12.99

Li10B/12B for Olympus £9.99

Li40B/42B for Olympus £9.99

Li50B for Olympus £9.99

BLM-1 for Olympus £12.99

BLN-1 for Olympus £24.99

BLS-1 for Olympus £12.99

BLS-5 for Olympus £15.99

CGR-S006 for Panasonic £9.99

CGA-S007 for Panasonic £9.99

DMW-BCG10 for Panasonic £19.99

DMW-BCM13 for Panasonic £19.99

DMW-BLB13 for Panasonic £27.99

DMW-BLC12 for Panasonic £23.99

DMW-BLD10 for Panasonic £23.99

DMW-BLG10 for Panasonic £22.99

DMW-BMB9 for Panasonic £22.99

D-Li90 for Pentax £12.99

D-Li109 for Pentax £12.99

SLB-1137D for Samsung £9.99

SLB-1674 for Samsung £12.99

BG-1 for Sony £19.99

BX-1 for Sony £14.99

BY-1 for Sony £12.99

NP-FM500H for Sony £19.99

NP-FH50 for Sony £19.99

NP-FW50 for Sony £24.99

Battery Grips

Professional battery grips, made by Hahnel.

5DMkII for Canon £84.99

5DMkIII for Canon £84.99

6D for Canon £84.99

7D for Canon £84.99

70D for Canon £84.99

650D/700D for Canon £84.99

D600 for Nikon £84.99

D800/D810 for Nikon £84.99

D3300/D5300 for Nikon £74.99

D7100 for Nikon £84.99

Battery Chargers

Universal Chargers £19.99

Unipal ORIGINAL £24.99

Unipal PLUS £29.99

Unipal EXTRA £29.99

AA & AAA Chargers

Hahnel TC Novo inc. 4xAA £8.99

Energizer Pro inc. 4xAA £14.99

Energizer 1 Hr inc. 4xAA £22.99

Other Batteries

Pre-Charged Rechargeables

AA GP Recyko 3+1 FREE £5.24

AAA GP Recyko 3+1 FREE £5.24

AA Energizer Extreme (4) £8.99

AAA Energizer Extreme (4) £6.99

Standard Rechargeables

AA GP 2600mAh (4) £9.99

AA Lloytron 1300mAh (4) £3.99

AA Lloytron 2700mAh (4) £6.99

AAA Lloytron 1100mAh (4) £3.99

Lithium Batteries

AA Energizer Ultimate (4) £5.99

AAA Energizer Ultimate (4) £5.99

CR123A Energizer (1) £1.99

CR2 Energizer (1) £1.99

2CR5 Energizer (1) £3.99

CRP2 Energizer (1) £3.99

CRV3 Energizer (1) £5.99

A544 Energizer Alkaline (1) £1.99

A23 Energizer Alkaline (1) £1.99

LR44 Energizer Alkaline (2) £1.99

CR2025, CR2032 etc £1.99

Filters

One of the largest ranges of screw-in threaded filters in the UK, from Hoya, Kood and Marumi.

We carry sizes from 24mm, up to 105mm, and offer Clear Protectors, UVs, Skylights, Circular Polarisers, ND4s, ND8s, ND16s, ND32s, ND64s, ND500s, ND1000s, Variable NDs, Starbursts, Close Up Sets and more! Below are just a few examples...

KOOD Slim Frame UV Filters

37mm	£4.99
40.5mm	£4.99
46mm	£4.99
49mm	£4.99
52mm	£4.99
55mm	£5.99
58mm	£6.99
62mm	£7.99
67mm	£8.99
72mm	£9.99
77mm	£11.99
82mm	£14.99
86mm	£19.99

KOOD Slim Frame Circular Polarisers

37mm	£12.99
40.5mm	£12.99
46mm	£12.99
49mm	£12.99
52mm	£14.99
55mm	£15.99
58mm	£17.99
62mm	£19.99
67mm	£22.99
72mm	£26.99
77mm	£29.99
82mm	£34.99
86mm	£39.99

KOOD ND4 & ND8 Filters

52mm	£26.99
58mm	£34.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated Clear Protectors

37mm	£10.99
43mm	£10.99
46mm	£10.99
49mm	£10.99
52mm	£10.99
55mm	£11.99
58mm	£12.99
62mm	£14.99
67mm	£15.99
72mm	£17.99
77mm	£19.99
82mm	£22.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated UV Filters

52mm	£13.99
58mm	£15.99
62mm	£17.99
67mm	£19.99
72mm	£21.99
77mm	£24.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated Circular Polarisers

52mm	£31.99
58mm	£35.99
62mm	£39.99
67mm	£44.99
72mm	£49.99
77mm	£54.99
82mm	£69.99



Square Filters

We stock three widths of square filters: A-type (67mm wide), P-Type (84mm wide) and Z-Type (100mm wide). Made in the UK, Kood square filters are optically flat, with excellent colour density, neutrality and stability. They received a maximum 5 star rating from Digital Camera Magazine.

P-Type: 84mm wide filters

Standard Holder £5.99

Wide Angle Holder £6.99

Filter Wallet For 8 Filters £9.99

Adapter Rings 49-82mm £4.99

Circular Polariser £27.99

ND2 Solid £12.99

ND2 Soft Graduated £13.99

ND2 Hard Graduated £13.99

ND4 Solid £12.99

ND4 Soft Graduated £13.99

ND4 Hard Graduated £13.99

ND8 Solid £14.99

ND8 Soft Graduated £15.99

ND8 Hard Graduated £15.99

Light Blue Graduated £12.99

Dark Blue Graduated £12.99

Light Tobacco Graduated £12.99

Dark Tobacco Graduated £12.99

Light Sunset Graduated £14.99

Dark Sunset Graduated £14.99

Starbursts x4, x6, x8 £17.99

Red/Green/Yellow each £14.99

Six-piece ND Filter Kit £59.99

A popular kit containing an ND2, ND2 Soft Grad, ND4, ND4 Soft Grad, Filter Holder, plus Adapter Ring of your choice (49-82mm).

Z-Type: 100mm wide filters

Pro Holder £24.99

Adapter Rings 52-95mm £8.99

ND2 Solid £16.99

ND2 Soft Graduated £17.99

ND2 Hard Graduated £17.99

ND4 Solid £16.99

ND4 Soft Graduated £17.99

ND4 Hard Graduated £17.99

ND8 Solid £18.99

ND8 Soft Grad



The U.K.s Largest Used Equipment Specialist

The ORIGINAL commission sale specialists
We also PART EXCHANGE and BUY FOR CASH
Good quality equipment always wanted

Bronica ETRS/Si		28-80mm F2.8-4 L USM.....	E+ £349	17-50mm F2.8 EX DC OS HSM.....	E++ £199	50mm F1.4 MM.....	E++ £199	Olympus 18-180mm F3.5-6.3 Zuiko.....	E++ £249	E620 + HLD-5 Grip.....	E++ £199												
ETRSi Complete + Prism + Grip.....		28mm F2 ZE Zeiss.....	E+ £519	18-200mm F3.5-6.3 DC HSM OS.....	E+ £149	50mm F1.7 AE.....	E+ / E++ £89 - £99	Panasonic 25mm F1.4 Summilux D.....	E++ £299	E600 + 14-42mm.....	E++ £199												
ETRSi Complete.....		28mm F2.8 PCS Shift Leica.....	E++ £499	24-70mm F2.8 EX DG HSM.....	E++ £449	50mm F1.7 MM.....	E+ £89	Olympus 25mm F2.8 Zuiko.....	E++ £139	E600 Body + HLD-5 Grip.....	Mint- £379												
ETR Body Only.....		35-135mm F3.3-4.5 MM Contax.....	E++ £449	24-70mm F2.8 IF EX DG HSM....	E+ / E++ £329 - £389	60mm F2.8 AE Macro.....	E+ £299	Olympus 35mm F3.5 Macro Zuiko.....	E++ £98 - £129	E520 + 14-42mm.....	E++ £149												
30mm F3.5 PE Fisheye.....		35-350mm F3.5-5.6 L USM.....	E+ £499 - £549	28-300mm F3.5-5.6 DL.....	As Seen £49	80-200mm F4 MM.....	E++ £179	Olympus 40-150mm F3.5-4.5 ZuikoE+ / E++	£39 - £49	E520 Body Only.....	E+ £99												
40mm F4 E.....		35-70mm F3.4 MM Contax.....	E++ £289	28-70mm F3.5-4.5 AF.....	As Seen £25	85mm F1.4 AF.....	E++ £899	Olympus 40-150mm F4-5.6 ED.....		E450 + 14-42mm.....	E+ £129												
40mm F4 PE.....		35-70mm F3.5-4.5 EF.....	E++ £35	50mm F1.4 EX DG HSM.....	Mint- £219	85mm F2.8 MM.....	E+ £249	Zuiko.....	E+ / E++ £45 - £49	E420 + 17.5-45mm + 40-150mm.....	E++ £149												
45-90mm F4-5.6 PE.....		35mm F1.4 L USM.....	Mint- £789	50mm F2.8 EX DG Macro.....	E++ £149	100mm F2 AE.....	E++ £599	Olympus 50-200mm F2.8-3.5 SWD.....	E++ £499	E400 + 14-42mm.....	E+ £99												
50mm F2.8 PE.....		35mm F2.8 Macro DX ATX.....		70-200mm F2.8 EX Apo HSM.....	E+ / E++ £219 - £249	100mm F3.5 AE.....	E+ £179 - £199	Olympus 50-200mm F2.8-3.5 Zuiko.....	E++ £369 - £389														
70-140mm F4.5 PE.....		Tokina.....	E++ / New £249 - £299	70-300mm F4-5.6 Apo DG.....	E++ £69	100mm F4 S Planar.....	E++ £699	Olympus 50mm F2 ED Macro Zuiko.....	E++ £269														
105mm F4.5 PE Macro.....		45mm F2.8 TS-E.....	E++ £649 - £849	70-300mm F4-5.6 Apo Macro.....	E++ £49 - £79	135mm F2 (60 Year Edition).....	Unused £2,399	Sigma 70-200mm F2.8 Apo EX DG HSM.....	Mint- £399														
150mm F3.5 E.....		50-135mm F2.8 DX ATX.....		70-300mm F4-5.6 Macro.....	E++ £69	135mm F2.8 MM.....	E++ £199	Olympus 70-300mm F4-5.6 ED.....															
150mm F3.5 PE.....		Tokina.....	Ex Demo / E+ £329 - £399	70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro.....	E+ / E++ £179 - £199	180mm F2.8 AE.....	Unused £599	Zuiko.....	E++ / Mint- £189 - £199														
200mm F4.5 E.....		50mm F1.0 L USM.....	Mint- £2,999	100-300mm F4 Apo EX HSM.....	E+ £279	180mm F2.8 MM.....	E++ £349	Samyang 85mm F1.4 IF MC Aspherical.....	E+ £169														
200mm F5.6 E.....		50mm F1.2 L USM.....	E++ £799 - £889	105mm F2.8 EX DG Macro.....	E+ £179	200mm F4 AE.....	Unused £449 - £499	Olympus EC14 Zuiko Tele Converter.....	Mint- £189														
250mm F5.6 E.....		50mm F1.4 USM.....	E++ / Mint £199 - £219	120-300mm F2.8 EX DG OS HSM S.....	E++ £1,749	300mm F4 AE.....	E+ £299	Olympus EC20 2x Tele Converter.....	Mint- £249														
500mm F8 E.....		50mm F1.8 EF II.....	E++ £55 - £59	120-400mm F4.5-5.6 APO DG OS HSM. E+ / E++	£349	TLA20 Flash.....	E+ / E++ £15 - £39																
120 E Mag.....		50mm F1.8 EF MkII.....	E+ / E++ £129 - £149	135-400mm F4.5-5.6 Apo.....	E++ £179	TLA280 Flash.....	As Seen / Unused £39 - £149																
120 Ei Mag.....		50mm f2.5 EF Macro.....	E++ £149	170-500mm F5-6.3 Apo.....	E+ £149	TLA30 Flash.....	E+ / Unused £19 - £49																
Polaroid Mag E.....		55-200mm F4.5-5.6 USM.....	E++ £59	500mm F4.5 Apo EX HSM.....	E+ £1,795	TLA360 Flash.....	E+ / E++ £75 - £89																
Angle Finder E.....		55-250mm F4-5.6 EFS IS.....	E++ £99	600mm F8 Reflex.....	E++ £179	TLA480 Flash.....	E+ £129																
Rotary Finder E.....		60mm F2.8 EFS Macro.....	E++ £199																				
Speed Grip E.....		70-200mm F2.8 Di LD (if) Macro Tamron.....	E+ £299																				
Extension Tube E14.....		70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	Exc £549																				
Pro Shade E.....		70-200mm F4 L IS USM.....	E++ £599 - £649																				
		70-200mm f4 L USM.....	E++ £339 - £349																				
		70-300mm F4-5.6 Di Tamron.....	E+ £59																				
		70-300mm F4-5.6 IS USM.....	E+ / E++ £199 - £239																				
		70-300mm F4-5.6 L IS USM.....	E+ / E++ £649 - £719																				
		70-300mm F4.5-5.6 DO IS USM E+ / E++	£299 - £399																				
		75-300mm F4-5.6 EF III.....	E++ £79																				
		75-300mm F4-5.6 USM III.....	E+ £79																				
		80-200mm F4.5-5.6 EF III.....	E++ £49																				
		80-200mm F4.5-5.6 USM.....	E+ £49																				
		800mm F5.6 L IS USM.....	Mint- £7,495																				
		85mm F1.2 L USM MkII.....	E++ / Mint- £999 - £1,089																				
		85mm F1.4 IF MC Aspherical Samyang.....	E++ £169																				
		85mm F1.8 USM.....	E++ / Mint- £199																				
		90mm F4 Dreamagon Seibold.....	E++ £99																				
		100-300mm F4.5-5.6 USM.....	E+ £79																				
		100-400mm F4.5-5.6 L IS USM. E+ / E++	£689 - £729																				
		100mm F2 MM + mount adapter.....	E++ £749																				
		100mm F2 USM.....	E+ £259																				
		100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM. E++ / Mint-	£499 - £529																				
		100mm F2.8 USM Macro.....	E++ £299																				
		200-500mm F5-6.3 Di LD AF Tamron.....	E++ £489																				
		200mm F2.8 L USM II.....	E++ £399																				
		300mm F2.8 ATX SD Tokina.....	E+ £749																				
		300mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	E++ £2,749																				
		300mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	E++ £1,899																				
		300mm F4 L IS USM.....	E+ / Mint- £649 - £699																				
		300mm F4 L USM.....	E+ £449																				
		400mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	E+ £4,189																				
		400mm F2.8 L USM.....	E+ £1,849																				
		400mm F5.6 L USM.....	E++ £729 - £749																				
		500mm F4 L IS USM.....	E+ £3,849																				
		600mm F4 L USM.....	E+ £2,995																				
		160E Speedlite.....	E++ £5																				
		200E Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £9 - £15																				
		200M Speedlite.....	E+ £9																				
		300EZ Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £15 - £29																				
		380EX Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £49 - £59																				
		420EX Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £65 - £79																				
		430EX Speedlite.....	E++ £99																				
		430EZ Speedlite.....	As Seen / E+ £15 - £29																				
		540EZ Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £39 - £49																				
		550EX Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £85 - £109																				
		580EX MkII Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £189 - £199																				
		580EX Speedlite.....	E+ / E++ £119 - £159																				
		ML3 MacroLite.....	E++ £49																				
		MR-14EX Macro Ringlite.....	E+ / Mint- £219 - £279																				
		ST-E2 Transmitter.....	E+ / Mint £59 - £89																				



See up to 3 images of each used item on website
Website updates used equipment list 10-15 times daily
All items come with 6 month warranty - (unless stated)
Our knowledgeable staff are on hand and ready to help

M Monochrom Black Body Only.....E++ / Mint £3,849 - £3,999	18-105mm F3.5-4.5 G AFS ED DX VR.....E++ / Mint- £129 - £149	Tokina 50-135mm F2.8 DX ATX Pro.....E++ £329
ME Anthracite Body Only....E++ / Mint £2,949 - £2,979	18-135mm F3.5-5.6 AFS DX.....E+ £119	Tokina 80-400mm F4.5-5.6 ATX.....E++ £199
M9P Black Body Only.....E++ / Mint- £2,749 - £2,799	18-140mm F3.5-5.6 AF-S G ED VR DX.....Mint- £279	Voigtlander 20mm F3.5 SLII.....Mint- £279
M9 Black Body Only.....E++ £2,399	20mm F2.8 AFD.....E+ / E++ £279	Zeiss 18mm F3.5 ZF.2.....E++ £699
M9 Steel Grey Body Only.....E++ £2,399	20mm F2.8 AFD.....E+ / E++ £279	Zeiss 21mm F2.8 ZF.....E++ £749
M8 Black Body Only.....E+ £799 - £849	20-35mm F2.8 AFD.....Exc / E+ £249 - £449	Zeiss 25mm F2.8 ZF.....E++ £449
M8 Chrome Body Only.....E+ £699	24mm F1.4 G AFS ED.....Mint- £990	Zeiss 25mm F2.8 ZF.2.....E++ £539 - £579
M7 0.72x (Test) Black Body Only.....E++ £1,499	24mm F2.8 AFD.....E++ / Mint- £229 - £249	Zeiss 35mm F2 Distagon ZF.2 E++ / Mint- £549 - £599
M7 0.72x Chrome Body Only.....E++ £1,499	24mm F3.5 ED PC-E.....E++ £1,089	Zeiss 50mm F1.4 ZF.2.....E++ £399
M6 0.72x 'Panda' Body Only.....E+ £849	24-70mm F2.8 G AFS ED.....E+ / E++ £749 - £899	Zeiss 85mm F1.4 ZF.....New £799
M6 0.72x Black Body + Winder M.....E+ £699	24-85mm F3.5-4.5 G ED VR.....E++ £279	Zeiss 85mm F1.4 ZF.2.....E++ £749
M6 0.72x Black Body Only.....E+ £699 - £1,499	24-120mm F3.5-5.6 ED AFD.....E+ £99	Kenko 2x Pro300 Converter.....E+ £75
M5 Black Body Only.....E+ £499	24-120mm F3.5-5.6 G AFS ED VR.....E++ £149 - £159	Sigma 1.4x Apo EX Converter.....E+ £79
M4P Anniversary Chrome + 50mm F2.....E++ £1,875	24-120mm F4 AFS G ED VR.....E++ £499	Sigma 2x Apo EX Converter.....E++ £99
M4 Chrome Body Only.....E+ £599 - £699	28mm F2.8 AF.....E++ £99	TC-14EII Converter.....E++ £189
16/18/21mm F4 Tri Elmar + Finder.....E+ / Mint- £2,749 - £2,989	28-105mm F3.5-4.5 AFD.....E++ £129	TC-17 EII Converter.....E++ £199
18mm F3.8 Asph M Black.....E++ £1,599	35mm F1.4 G AFS.....E++ £899	TC-20 EIII AFS Converter.....Mint- £269
21mm F1.4 Asph M Black 6bit.....Mint- £3,699	35mm F1.8 G AFS DX.....E++ £109	TC-20E Converter.....E++ £129
21mm F2.8 Asph M Black E++ / Mint- £1,449 - £1,499	35mm F2 AFD.....E++ £169	TC-20E III AFS Converter.....Mint- £249
21mm F2.8 M Black.....E+ / E++ £1,089 - £1,199	35-105mm F3.5-4.5 AF.....As Seen £39	TC-20EII Converter.....E++ £179
21mm F3.4 Super Elmar.....Mint- £1,799	45mm F2.8 D PC-E ED Macro.....Mint- £1,089	R1C1 Speedlight Set.....Mint- £399
21mm F4 Chrome + Finder.....E+ £1,149	50mm F1.4 AFD.....E++ £179	SB21B Ringflash.....E++ £99 - £179
24mm F1.4 Asph M - Black.....E+ £3,389	50mm F1.4 AFN.....E++ £129	SB22 Speedlight.....E++ £35
24mm F2.8 Asph M Black.....Exc / E++ £989 - £1,349	50mm f1.8 AFD.....E++ £65 - £79	SB22S Speedlight.....E+ £35
24mm F2.8 Asph M Black 6bit.....E++ £1,489	50mm F1.8 G AFS.....E++ £119	SB24 Speedlight.....As Seen / E+ £19 - £39
28/35/50 F4 Tri Elmar.....E++ £2,399	55-200mm F4-5.6 AFS DX G VR.....Mint- £119	SB25 Speedlight.....E++ £49
28mm F2 Asph M Black.....E+ £1,399	60mm F2.8 AF Micro.....E+ £169	SB27 Speedlight.....E++ £59
28mm F2 Asph M Black 6bitE+ / Mint- £1,589 - £1,595	60mm F2.8 AFD Micro.....E++ £209 - £229	SB500 Speedlight.....Mint- £149
28mm F2.8 Asph M Black.....E+ £1,029	70-200mm F2.8 G AFS ED VR.....Mint- £789	SB50DX Speedlight.....E+ / E++ £39 - £49
28mm F2.8 Asph M Black 6bit.....E++ £1,149	70-200mm F2.8 G AFS ED VR II.....E+ / Mint- £1,119 - £1,179	SB600 Speedlight.....E+ / Mint- £109 - £149
28mm F2.8 M Black.....E+ £689	70-200mm F4 G AFS ED VR.....E++ £679	SB800 Speedlight.....E++ / Mint- £159 - £179
35mm F1.4 Asph M Black.....E+ £1,689	70-200mm F4 G VR ED.....E++ / Mint- £679 - £699	SB80DX Speedlight.....E+ £79
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers... 'Dinah Grace at the Wintergarten, Berlin', c1933, by Martin Munkácsi

Márton Mermelstein was born in Transylvania (then Hungary, now Romania) in 1896. To disguise their Jewishness, his father changed the family name to Munkácsi: 'cs' in Hungarian is pronounced much like 'ch' in English. From 1928-1934 he based himself in Berlin, but when the Nazis started making life difficult, he moved to New York. He became one of the world's best-known photographers: in 1936 alone he reputedly earned \$100,000. Both Cartier-Bresson and Avedon praised him as their greatest inspiration, one for reportage, the other for fashion. And yet today he is largely forgotten. He died in poverty in 1963 and his archive was dissipated when several universities declined to accept it.

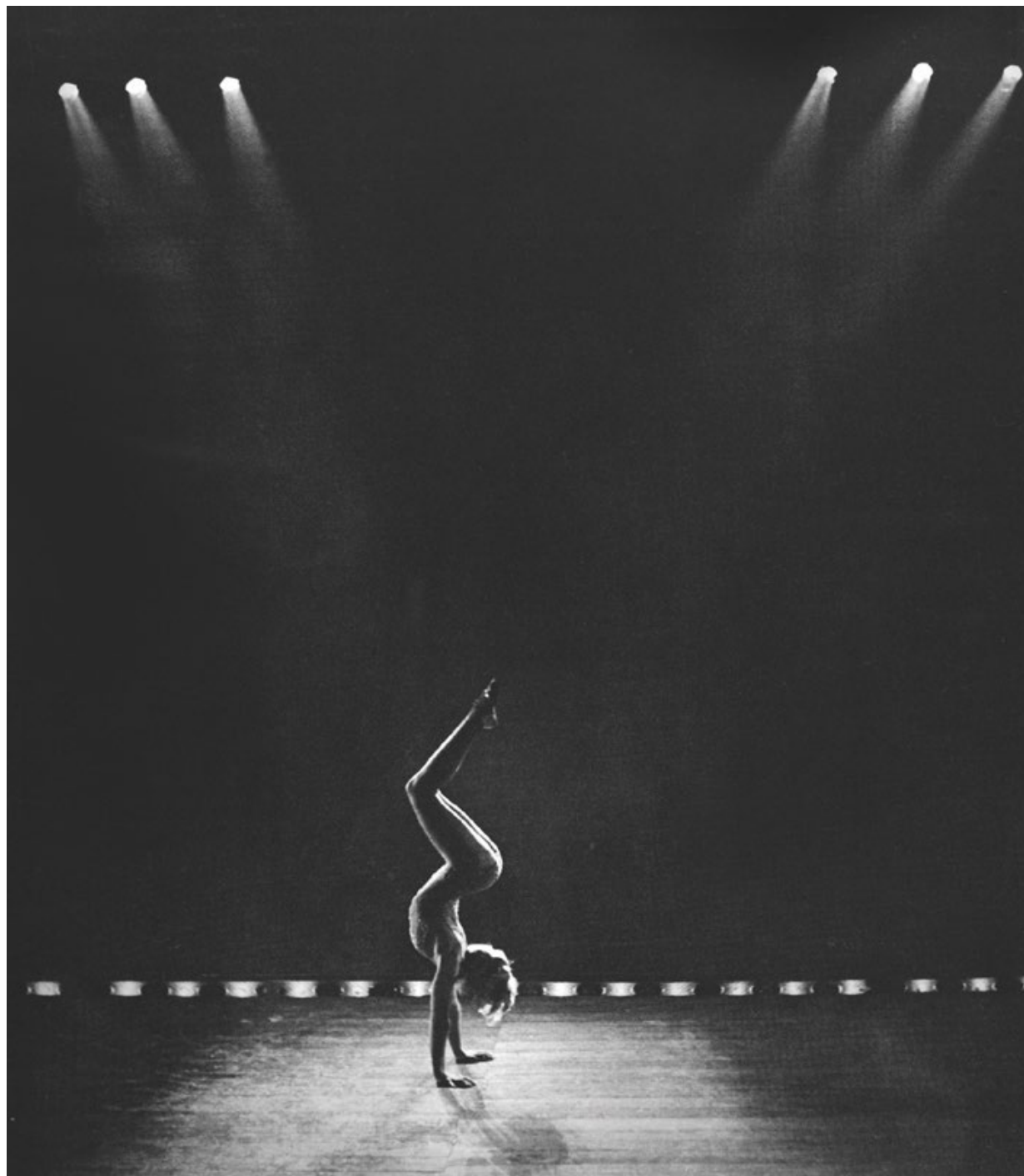
He had made his name with sports and action photography, and then transferred the same techniques to other genres, including reportage and (as here) theatre. This is taken from a much sought-after book, *Modern Photography 1934-5*. It was published by The Studio Limited in London and contains quite a long essay by Ansel Adams on 'The New Photography'.

No fixed plans

Munkácsi had no time for such dogma, and looking at the vitality of his pictures, one can see why. At first sight, this is no more than a very dramatic picture, exquisitely exposed and with the most superbly simple composition. But then one starts to think more deeply about it. The fragility and relatively tiny size of the dancer against the huge forbidding blackness, together with the glare of the spotlights: it is hard not to see them as metaphors for the fragility of a dancer's career and of Germany's future.

Did Munkácsi think of this? Probably not consciously. Indeed, he seems generally to have given little thought to the

'He became one of the world's best-known photographers: in 1936 he reputedly earned \$100,000'



© MARTIN MUNKÁCSI

morning. On page 23 of the same book, he says, 'I have no ideas. I travel around the world without any fixed plans... If I am lucky, I take a chance of a snapshot, and then try to convince my editors that these pictures are the "real good ones".' One is tempted to ask, though, what his subconscious was doing.

Of course, he was as good at deploying false modesty as at any other form of self-promotion (and he was pretty good). Consider, though, the difficulties under

which he laboured when creating this 'snap': slow films, uncoated lenses and probably no exposure meter (the Metrawatt had just been invented). That's before you think about getting access to the Wintergarten theatre, or working with the sensational new *akrobatische Tänzerin* or acrobatic dancer, Dinah Grace (1916-1963). She is misidentified (twice) in the book as Dinah Grave, but then, it was published just after he fled Berlin. Maybe he was distracted. **AP**

Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. **Next week he considers an image by Laura Majolino**

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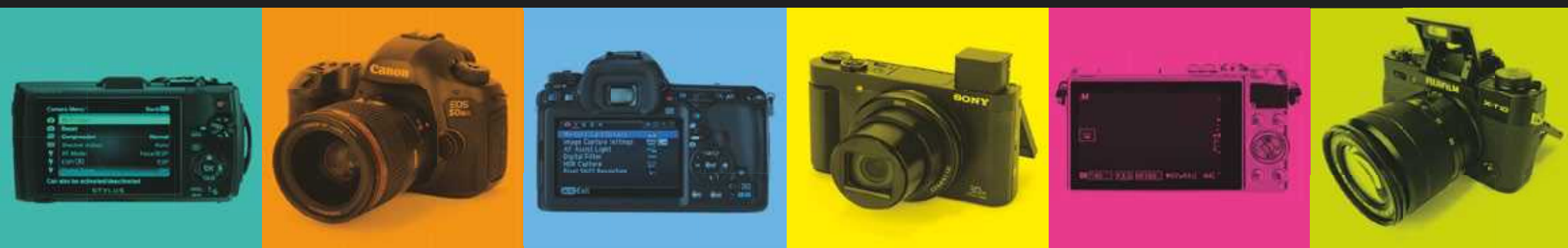
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Welcome



Every November we like to provide our readers with a round-up of the best new cameras released over the past year. This time we're covering 38 models, comprising the best DSLRs, CSCs, bridge cameras and compacts. We've reviewed most of these cameras too, and had useful hands-on time with the rest.

A few trends are readily apparent. It's been a relatively quiet year for DSLRs, with a mature market and only

Canon, Nikon and Pentax still active in the consumer sector. However, we've seen lots of mirrorless models, with the likes of Fujifilm, Olympus, Panasonic and Sony competing fiercely for new converts to their systems. The market for inexpensive and simple compact cameras may have collapsed, but the enthusiast sector has never been healthier, with plenty of models sporting large sensors for higher image quality, fast or long zoom lenses, and lots of manual controls. Despite dire predictions, smartphones haven't killed off 'proper' cameras quite yet.

Andy Westlake, technical editor

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Canon EOS 750D

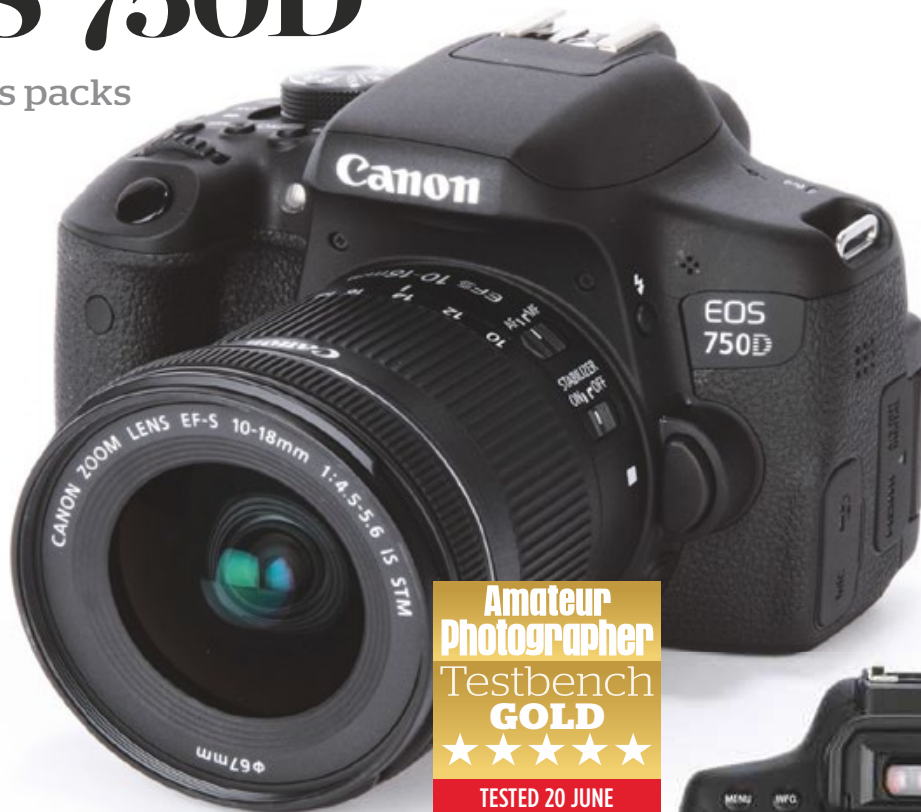
Canon's latest DSLR for beginners packs an impressive feature set into an easy-to-use body design

LAUNCHED alongside the EOS 760D, the Canon EOS 750D brings the majority of that camera's specifications down to a slightly more attractive price point by sacrificing a handful of enthusiast-oriented niceties, such as its top-plate LCD and rear control dial.

It's a significant upgrade over the previous EOS 700D, with a 24.2MP APS-C sensor, 19-point all-cross-type AF system, and Wi-Fi and NFC technologies joining the touch-sensitive and fully articulated 3in LCD.

Thanks to the latest Hybrid CMOS AF III system, focusing in live view is exemplary – something that's helped by the ability to key the point of focus through the touchscreen. Focusing more conventionally reveals a similarly fast and silent performance, in part thanks to the STM technology inside the EF-S 18–55mm f/3.5–5.6 IS STM kit lens.

While the camera can't quite match the dynamic range offered by some of its peers, images at lower sensitivities display excellent control over noise and even settings as high as ISO 6,400 are usable with a little careful post-production of raw files. Resolution is as



Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 20 JUNE

expected for a 24MP camera with an anti-aliasing filter, and therefore fractionally lower than some rival cameras.

Those wanting a little more manual control will likely prefer the similar EOS 760D, but for beginners needing a camera that's simple to operate the EOS 750D is recommended.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C sensor
- Canon EF lens mount
- 19-point AF system
- DIGIC 6 image processor
- ISO 100–12,800 (expandable to ISO 25,600)
- 5fps continuous shooting
- Price £495 (body only)



Canon EOS 760D

With the same core components as the 750D, the Canon EOS 760D is aimed at budding enthusiasts

ONE OF twin updates to the EOS 700D, the EOS 760D is the first triple-digit EOS model to have a top-plate LCD and a control dial on the rear, providing a shooting experience more akin to its enthusiast models.

Like the EOS 750D, it employs a 24.2MP CMOS sensor and the 19-point system from the EOS 70D, with each point of the cross type for enhanced sensitivity. The inclusion of Wi-Fi, a new 7,560-pixel metering sensor and the latest Hybrid CMOS AF III to provide autofocus in both live view and video recording, also sweeten the deal.

The combination of aluminium-alloy chassis and polycarbonate-resin body give a reassuringly solid feel. Despite some of the menu's controls being on the small side, the articulated touchscreen is responsive when pressed, while the STM technology employed in certain lenses lives up to its promise of fast and near-silent operation.

The metering system can generally be relied upon, only requiring occasional intervention to prevent highlight details from being clipped, although dynamic range is slightly more



Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 1 AUGUST

restricted than those in rival cameras. The use of an anti-aliasing filter also means the camera falls a little behind filterless models such as the Nikon D5500 and Pentax K-S2 with its recording of fine details.

Noise, however, is well controlled up to ISO 800 and, with a little manual noise reduction of raw files, images are still usable past this point. For aspiring enthusiasts, the EOS 760D ticks all the right boxes and is a very capable DSLR.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- Canon EF lens mount
- 19-point AF system
- DIGIC 6 image processor
- ISO 100–12,800 (expandable to ISO 25,600)
- 5fps continuous shooting
- Price £650 (body only)



Canon EOS 5DS R

With a 50.6-million-pixel CMOS sensor, the Canon EOS 5DS R is the highest resolution full-frame DSLR

BASED on the proven EOS 5D Mark III body design, the EOS 5DS R more than doubles the resolution compared to previous Canon models and trumps both the 36MP Nikon D810 and the 42.4MP Sony Alpha 7R II.

Two versions of the same camera are available – the EOS 5DS includes an optical low-pass filter to minimise possible image artefacts, while on the EOS 5DS R its effects are cancelled to give maximum detail. It's great to see Canon offering the choice, but in our side-by-side testing we preferred the EOS 5DS R.

With a rugged weather-sealed body and a comprehensive set of well-placed external controls, the 5DS R is a joy to use. The sophisticated 61-point autofocus and 150,000-pixel metering systems are both impressively accurate, and a redesigned mirror mechanism and 'silent' shutter mode make the camera discreet to shoot with.

The large, bright viewfinder has an information overlay that can show more settings than most other DSLRs, and the camera works very well in live view too.



Amateur
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GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 27 JUNE

About the only criticisms are a relatively limited ISO range, huge file sizes and the fixed rather than articulated rear screen. However, image quality is absolutely superb, and landscape or studio photographers looking for the maximum possible detail should love the Canon EOS 5DS R.



At a glance

- 50.6-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-6,400 (expandable 50-12,800)
- 61-point autofocus
- 5fps continuous shooting
- Full HD video at 30, 25 and 24fps
- Price £3,200 (body only)

Leica S

The Leica S (Typ 007) medium-format DSLR is based around a 37.5-million-pixel CMOS sensor

FIRST shown in prototype form at Photokina 2014, the Leica S (Typ 007) is a successor to the CCD-based Leica S2 from 2009. It uses the unique Leica ProFormat sensor size of 30x45mm, or about 60% larger area than full frame. The S2 itself continues on sale in a slightly redesigned form as the S-E (Typ 006).

Unashamedly a top-end model that's designed primarily for working professional photographers, the S brings medium-format image quality in a conventional-shaped body that's similar in size to professional full-frame DSLRs. It features weather-resistant construction and continuous shooting at up to 3.5 frames per second, which is unusually fast for medium format. Even 4K video recording is on offer, although only from a small Super 35 crop in the centre of the frame. The line-up of ten lenses ranges from 19mm-equivalent wideangle to 144mm-equivalent telephoto. Contax and Hasselblad lenses can be used too via Leica's electronic adapters.

In terms of controls, the Leica S uses a minimalist layout that contrasts strongly with button-encrusted pro DSLRs, having twin



control dials and four buttons arranged around the rear LCD. A joystick on the back navigates menus and changes settings.

The Leica S is probably not the sort of camera that even the most ambitious of enthusiasts would consider buying, given the price tag of the system. Instead, it will be most attractive to professional studio and landscape photographers looking for a rugged, portable system with exceptionally high image quality.



At a glance

- 37.5-million-pixel, 30x45mm sensor
- ISO 100-12,500
- Leica S lens mount
- 3.5 fps shooting
- 0.87x viewfinder
- 3.2in, 921,600-dot LCD screen
- 4K video recording
- Price £12,900 (body only)
- Not yet tested

Nikon D5500

Nikon's mid-range DX-format DSLR comes with class-leading image quality and excellent handling

A QUICK comparison of the Nikon D5500's specs with those of its D5300 predecessor doesn't reveal many differences, with the new camera constructed around the same 24.2MP APS-C sensor. However, Nikon has integrated touchscreen control to the 3.2in, 1.04-million-dot articulating LCD and added Flat Picture Control for easier video post-production, but GPS has been omitted.

Despite a smaller and lighter body than the D5300, the D5500's grip is pleasingly more substantial. Physical controls are kept to a minimum, although the ability to select options through the touchscreen is useful, particularly as it's as responsive as expected.

The viewfinder is reasonably large and clear, while the LCD displays excellent detail and accurate colours. The camera's 39-point AF system is good, although focusing during live view is somewhat tardy.

Images display rich colours and scenes are metered well, with the sensor's wide dynamic range proving to be a blessing when dealing with the camera's occasional tendency to clip highlight details. The lack of an anti-aliasing



Amateur
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GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 14 MARCH

filter in front of the sensor also means that excellent detail is recorded at low sensitivities, and this is complemented by a good handle over noise across the sensitivity range.

The Nikon D5500 brings some welcome updates and refinements, making it a strong competitor to the likes of the Canon EOS 750D.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, DX-format CMOS sensor
- 3.2in, 1.04-million-dot TFT vari-angle LCD touchscreen
- 39 AF points, including nine cross-type
- ISO 100-25,600
- 5 frames per second shooting
- Price £540 (body only)



Nikon D7200

Rugged and sophisticated, the Nikon D7200 is fast and reliable but offers little extra compared to the older D7100

NIKON'S D7100 was already a highly specified enthusiast DSLR, but the D7200 is an even more appealing DX-format flagship. The latest Expeed 4 processor enables 6fps burst shooting for up to 27 raw files or 100 JPEGs, the autofocus system has increased sensitivity in very low light, and full HD video recording is available at up to 50/60p.

Aside from partnering Wi-Fi with NFC and adding a Flat Picture Control, the camera continues much the same as the D7100, with a weather and dust-resistant magnesium-alloy body and polycarbonate front. While quite large and heavy, it's still comfortable to hold, with an abundance of direct controls making it quick and easy to change settings.

The viewfinder boasts 100% coverage and an impressive 0.94x magnification, while the 3.2in, 1.23million-dot LCD presents details clearly, although it's a shame it's neither a touchscreen nor one that can be articulated. The camera does, however, focus swiftly in good light and maintains a decent speed in poorer lighting conditions, with only sluggish live-view focusing letting it down.



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Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 25 APRIL

Lab tests show a strong dynamic range performance up to around ISO 1,600, while resolution is similarly impressive next to results from other cameras equipped with APS-C sensors. The situation is much the same with noise, with usable results up to ISO 6,400.

The Nikon D7200 may be a fairly minor update, but it remains a good choice for the outdoor photographer prioritising reliable AF performance and strong image quality.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized sensor
- ISO 100-25,600 (standard), ISO 51,200-102,400 (b&w settings)
- 3.2in, 1.23-million-dot fixed TFT LCD screen
- 52-point Advanced Multi-Cam 3500 II AF system
- Price £850 (body only)



Pentax K-S2

The K-S2 includes an impressive set of features usually found in more expensive models

IN TERMS of value for money, it's difficult to beat the Pentax K-S2. It goes head-to-head with the Nikon D5500 and Canon EOS 760D in the ultra-competitive mid-range DSLR bracket, but includes a whole range of features you'd normally expect to find on more expensive models. It has two control dials rather than one, is sealed against dust and moisture, and uses a large bright glass pentaprism viewfinder (as opposed to the pentamirror type). In addition, it has in-body image stabilisation that works with any lens, and Pentax's unique anti-aliasing simulator. These features combine to make it probably the most pleasant DSLR in its class to use.

All is not necessarily rosy in the Pentax garden, though, and the K-S2 has its weak points too. Its handgrip isn't especially comfortable to hold, despite being unusually large for what is a fairly small DSLR. The camera's JPEG image output is some way adrift of the full potential of its raw files, too, due to aggressive smoothing away of fine detail and a tendency towards overly cool auto white balance. The supplied 18-50mm



Amateur
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Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 30 MAY

kit lens is collapsible for improved portability, but it isn't very sharp at the extremes of the zoom range.

However if you're prepared to shoot raw, the K-S2 gives excellent image quality. Its compatibility with a huge range of older Pentax K-mount lenses is also a bonus.

At a glance

- 20.1MP, APS-C CMOS sensor
- Pentax K mount
- ISO 100-51,200
- 5.4fps continuous shooting
- In-body image stabilisation
- 3in, 921,000-dot articulated LCD screen
- Price £440 (body only)



Pentax K-3 II

Updating the highly regarded K-3, the latest Pentax K-3 II flagship includes built-in GPS

WITH Pentax's anticipated full-frame DSLR delayed until early 2016, the K-3 II remains Pentax's flagship. It delivers almost everything from the previous K-3 but adds Pentax's Astrotracer technology for capturing stars and other celestial bodies, together with improved continuous autofocus and image stabilisation.

A built-in GPS system has replaced the K-3's flash, while the new Pixel Shift Resolution promises better details and more accurate colour by combining four exposures of the same scene. Testing shows it manages to do this impressively well too, although it only suits static subjects captured on a tripod.

Otherwise the camera mirrors the K-3, with a rugged, weather-resistant body that offers many physical controls in logical positions. The AF system works very well, despite only having 27 points, while the LCD is clear and colour accurate with the large viewfinder a joy.

Raw files are characterised by excellent detail, good noise handling and decent dynamic range, while the improved Shake Reduction system brings a clear benefit when shooting at slower shutter speeds.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 25 JULY

The camera's metering system, however, sometimes requires manual intervention to get the exposure right, while the quality of JPEGs straight out of the camera could also be improved.

While the inclusion of an articulated screen, Wi-Fi and NFC would make the Pentax K-3 II an even stronger competitor to the likes of the Canon EOS 70D, without these it still offers plenty for the enthusiast user at a fair price.

At a glance

- 24.35-million-pixel CMOS APS-C sensor
- ISO 100-51,000
- 3.2in, 1.04-million-dot TFT LCD
- 8.3fps continuous shooting
- 27-point autofocus system
- 86,000-pixel RGB Matrix sensor
- Price £670 (body only)



Canon EOS M3

Canon's first mirrorless model for enthusiast photographers almost hits the mark

CANON has been rather slow in responding to the trend towards mirrorless compact system cameras, and the EOS M3 is its first that aims to cater for the needs of enthusiast photographers who want a smaller, but equally capable alternative to a DSLR. There's actually a lot to like here – the M3 is compact, well-made and handles well, and Canon's new 24.2-million-pixel CMOS sensor gives excellent image quality in a wide range of situations.

Autofocus speed was the Achilles heel of previous EOS M models, but it's much-improved due to the sensor's new Hybrid CMOS AF II system, at least for static subjects. Metering and white balance are very reliable, meaning that the M3 consistently delivers attractive images.

Compare its specifications to its competitors, though, and there are several areas where the EOS M3 comes up short. Its continuous shooting speed is slower, and its buffer limited when shooting raw. Other brands offer desirable features such as built-in viewfinders, in-body image stabilisation or 4K

video recording for not much more money, too. Canon's EF-M lens range is rather small, and while the M3 can use native EF lenses via a mount adapter, autofocus is often slow.

However, the EOS M3 is still an attractive option for Canon users looking for a smaller and lighter alternative to a DSLR.



Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 16 MAY



At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- Canon EF-M mount
- 4.2fps continuous shooting
- Tilting touchscreen
- ISO 100-12,800 (expandable to ISO 25,600)
- Full HD video at 30, 25 and 24fps
- Price £430 (body only)

Canon EOS M10

The entry-level EOS M10 is a simplified beginner-friendly camera in a small package

WITH the EOS M10, Canon has revisited the ground covered by its original mirrorless model, the EOS M, but made a range of improvements that aim to address that camera's most obvious shortcomings.

The 18-million-pixel CMOS sensor stays the same, and includes on-chip phase detection for autofocus. However, the rest of the AF system has been updated, and Canon claims it's 2.4x faster than the M's.

The second big improvement is the rear touchscreen, which now tilts upwards and forwards for selfies – 2015's 'must-have' feature. Canon's touch interface is excellent, which is very welcome as the M10 has relatively few external controls. It does, however, gain a proper control dial around the shutter button for changing exposure settings.

A small built-in flash pops up from the top-plate, but the M10 has no hotshoe for more powerful units. There's no option for an electronic viewfinder, either. Built-in Wi-Fi allows connection to a smartphone or tablet for remote control and image sharing, though.

To go with the M10, Canon has made a new

kit zoom lens, the EF-M 15-45mm f/3.5-6.3 IS STM. It has a collapsible design to take up less space in a bag, but it's not quite as small as the 16-50mm powerzooms from the likes of Sony and Samsung.

Overall, the M10 looks like it should be a capable enough performer for users wanting better image quality than a smartphone in a small, easy-to-use package. However, it offers little to distinguish it from the competition.



At a glance

- 18-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- DIGIC 6 image processor
- 49-point Hybrid CMOS AF II system
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilt touchscreen
- ISO 100-12,800 (expandable to ISO 25,600)
- Built-in Wi-Fi and NFC
- Price £309 (body only)
- Not yet tested

Fujifilm X-A2

Fujifilm's entry-level CSC is a simple and easy-to-use model for beginners that's capable of fine results

THE X-A2 may opt for a similar retro style to its more advanced Fujifilm siblings, but it differentiates itself in a number of key areas to appeal more to budget-conscious users upgrading from compacts and smartphones.

It eschews the company's X-Trans CMOS sensor, employing a more conventional 16.3MP Bayer sensor in its place, while the 3in display can be tilted through a 175° angle to facilitate group and self-portraits. There's a hotshoe and built-in Wi-Fi, but no viewfinder.

Despite its lightweight plastic body, the X-A2 is still finished to a high standard. Handling, however, is a mixed affair, with the large and positive-feeling top-plate command dial contrasting with the loose and poorly placed rear wheel that's prone to being inadvertently nudged out of position.

Thanks to the EXR Processor II, the camera manages to sustain its 5.6fps burst rate to 35 JPEGs or 12 raw + JPEG files when used in conjunction with a suitably speedy memory card, while autofocus performance is perfectly decent. With a reliable metering



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 18 APRIL

system, admirable noise control and dynamic range readings that remain high until ISO 800, the camera delivers images beyond what's expected from a manufacturer's entry-level model. Together with its very reasonable performance and agreeable price, it makes for a fine first CSC for beginners.

At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C sensor
- Fujifilm X mount
- 256-zone metering system
- 5.6fps burst mode
- ISO 200-6,400 (expandable to ISO 100-25,600)
- 3in, 920,000-dot tilt-type LCD screen
- Price £350 (with 16-50mm lens)



Fujifilm X-T10

With the X-T10, Fujifilm has packed most of the best bits of the highly regarded X-T1 into a smaller and cheaper camera

FUJIFILM scored one of the hits of last year with its X-T1 premium compact system camera, a DSLR-style model with lots of external controls. With the X-T10 it has tried to repeat the formula in a smaller, cheaper package, and by and large it has succeeded.

Indeed, the X-T10 includes most of the core technology of its big brother, with the same sensor, processor and tilting LCD screen. It even debuts a new, much more advanced 77-area autofocus system that's been retrospectively added to the X-T1 via a firmware update. The result is an impressively capable camera for the price.

With top-plate dials for shutter speed, exposure compensation and drive mode, the X-T10 retains much of the charm of its big brother. It offers equally good image quality as well, with especially attractive JPEG colour output thanks to Fuji's Film Simulation modes. However, it lacks the tough, weathersealed magnesium-alloy construction, and it has a somewhat smaller electronic viewfinder than the X-T1, although it is competitive with most of its direct rivals from other brands.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 11 JULY

Indeed, compared to its competitors, the X-T10 is a very compelling choice. It is small, light, a pleasure to use and gives excellent image quality. Its main weak point is video, where the quality of its footage lags behind its main competitors. But for stills photographers it's a great choice, supported by Fujifilm's superb (if expensive) XF lens line-up.

At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C X-Trans CMOS II sensor
- 2.36-million-dot OLED viewfinder
- 3in, 920,000-dot tilting LCD
- New 77-area AF system
- ISO 200-6,400 (raw), 200-51,200 (JPEG)
- Price £500 (body only)



Leica SL (Typ 601)

This premium DSLR-like CSC sports a 24-million-pixel full-frame sensor and ultra-high-resolution viewfinder

LEICA isn't the most predictable of camera manufacturers, and its first full-frame compact system camera bucks expectations after the traditionally styled Leica Q compact. It's a DSLR-styled camera whose 4.4-million-dot 'EyeRes' viewfinder is easily the best EVF we've yet seen.

Based around the same lens mount as last year's APS-C Leica T, the SL uses a 24-million-pixel full-frame sensor that has no optical low-pass filter for maximum resolution. Almost any Leica lens ever made can be used via mount adapters.

With Leica's Maestro II processor on board, it's something of a speed demon too, capable of 11fps continuous shooting with focus and exposure fixed, or 7fps with autofocus and live view between frames.

Autofocus is impressively snappy too, with Leica claiming that it's faster than any other full-frame system camera, while 4K video can be recorded internally, as well as full HD.

Handling is based on the Leica S medium-format DSLR, with twin electronic control dials and four user-programmable buttons around



At a glance

- 24-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- 4.4-million-dot 'EyeRes' EVF
- Leica L mount
- 11fps continuous shooting
- ISO 50-50,000
- 4K video at 30fps
- Price £5,050 (body only)
- Not yet tested

the touchscreen, but relatively few other external controls. The dust and splashproofed body is machined from aluminium blocks, rather than die cast from magnesium alloy.

With its 24-90mm f/2.8-4 zoom the SL is bulky and heavy, not to mention hugely expensive. But it's highly impressive too.

Leica M Monochrom (Typ 246)

Leica's black & white-only rangefinder camera is a throwback masterpiece

ARRIVING three years after Leica's original M Monochrom rangefinder, the M Monochrom (Typ 246) inherits the same 24MP full-frame CMOS sensor as that employed by the Leica M-P (Typ 240) – just without its colour filter array. It's a significant jump from the 18MP CCD found inside the original Monochrom M, enabling full HD video and live view.

The camera's updated Maestro processor is also claimed to be three times faster, while the M mount makes the camera compatible with decades' worth of high-quality lenses.

At 680g without a lens the camera is decidedly weighty, due to a body crafted from die-cast magnesium-alloy with brass top and base-plates. The size of the focusing box inside the rangefinder requires precise control for critical focus – something that can be difficult with wide-aperture lenses – while the 921,600-dot, 3in screen provides good visibility in bright light.

The lack of a colour-filter array in front of the sensor translates to enhanced sensitivity, and control over noise is outstanding



Amateur Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 6 JUNE

throughout the ISO range (although the base sensitivity of ISO 320 may be limiting). A further benefit of the filterless design is dynamic range, while resolution is just as impressive right up to the camera's maximum sensitivity of ISO 25,000.

While obviously limiting in some respects – not least in price – the Leica M Monochrom (Typ 246) matches its sturdy build and classic design with stellar image quality.



At a glance

- Shoots only in monochrome
- 24-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- ISO 320-25,000
- 3in, 921,600-dot fixed LCD
- Leica M mount
- Price £5,750 (body only)

Nikon 1 J5

The 1 J5 is an entry-level CSC that offers super-fast autofocus and shooting

REPRESENTING the latest step in Nikon's beginner-focused J series of CSCs, the 1 J5 appears to be a far more serious proposition than previous models. In contrast to its more streamlined, minimally styled forebears, it benefits from a secondary command dial and a physical grip, while its new retro finish has a leather-like covering for better purchase.

Nikon has also made significant improvements on the inside, with a 1in, 20.8MP back-illuminated sensor and an updated Expeed 5A processing engine on board, together with the ability to capture video in 4K, albeit only at 15p. Full HD recording to 50/60p is available, though, as are Wi-Fi and NFC technologies, and the 1-series' ace card of 60fps burst shooting at full resolution is also present – a feature that still manages an impressive 20fps should you wish to maintain autofocus while shooting.

Its diminutive body manages to pack in a physical mode dial, pop-up flash and a dedicated video-record button. The rear 3in display can be tilted through 180° to face the front and a front-plate function

button gives greater customisability.

While its resolution compares well against rivals, the sensor's small size and the relatively limited line of compatible 1-series optics may discourage some. Users of previous J or S-series models, however, have an affordable and logical upgrade option with the 1 J5.



At a glance

- 20.8-million-pixel CX-format CMOS sensor
- Nikon 1 mount
- 4K video
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting LCD touchscreen
- ISO 160-12,800
- Wi-Fi and NFC enabled
- Price £260 (body only)
- Not yet tested

Olympus OM-D E-M5 II

Olympus's update to the hugely popular OM-D E-M5 comes with an array of refinements

OLYMPUS hit the jackpot with its original OM-D E-M5, thanks to its winning combination of excellent image quality, compact size and retro good looks. The Mark II version keeps the same 16.1-million-pixel Four Thirds MOS sensor, but improves in practically every other way imaginable.

The headline feature is a 40-million-pixel multi-shot mode. This can give superb images, but requires a tripod and only really works with static subjects. It's made possible by a more precise (and more effective) 5-axis in-body image-stabilisation system, and a refined, super-quiet low-vibration shutter.

Both the viewfinder and screen get significant improvements, with a larger, higher resolution 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF and a 1.04-million-dot touchscreen that's now fully articulated rather than tilt-only. The control layout is substantially improved too, with chunky, better-positioned control dials, a locking mode dial and more external buttons. It's hugely user-customisable too, so long as you can put up with Olympus's tortuously over-complicated menus.



Amateur
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GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 21 MARCH

The weather-sealed body gains a slightly larger handgrip, although it's still on the small side. There's no built-in flash, but the camera comes with a clever small clip-on unit with an articulated head, allowing bounce flash for more attractive lighting. Overall, the E-M5 II is a lovely camera to shoot with and capable of giving excellent results.



At a glance

- 16.1-million-pixel Four Thirds sensor
- 40-million-pixel, high-resolution composite mode
- ISO 100-25,600 (expanded)
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot articulated LCD touchscreen
- 1/8000sec maximum shutter speed
- Price £870 (body only)

Olympus OM-D E-M10 II

Olympus's entry-level DSLR-style CSC marries retro styling with attractive image quality

OLYMPUS'S fifth digital OM-D model marries the portable form of the OM-D E-M10 with some of the more recent developments seen inside the more senior EM-5 II and EM-1 offerings. The 16.1MP sensor and TruePic VII processor have both been left alone, but the camera sports a higher-resolution 2.36-million-dot OLED viewfinder. It also gains improved video functionality and a 5-axis image-stabilisation system.

An electronic shutter permits not only silent shutter operation but also shutter speeds of up to 1/16,000sec, while 8.5fps burst shooting, Wi-Fi, full HD video, and a whole suite of capture and processing effects nicely round off the spec sheet.

The 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting screen presents the scene faithfully and includes touch functionality, which is very useful when holding the camera at an angle. The camera feels comfortable in the hand, with minor design changes making it more enjoyable to operate than the E-M10.

There are few surprises in terms of image



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 17 OCTOBER

quality, with a good dynamic range, a largely unerring auto white balance system and accurate colours on default settings. It can't quite match the low-noise performance of some of its contemporaries, but in the right hands it's certainly capable of performing to a high standard.

At a glance

- 16.1-million-pixel, Four Thirds sensor
- 8.5fps burst shooting mode
- 5-axis image stabilisation
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting LCD
- ISO 100-25,600 (expanded)
- Built-in Wi-Fi
- Price £550 (body only)

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF7

The ultra-compact GF7 is a very capable little camera but faces strong competition

WITH an LCD screen that can be swung up above its top-plate to face the front, the Lumix DMC-GF7 is one of a slew of recent models hoping to tempt casual users, who are used to capturing selfies, into more considered photography.

On the inside, Panasonic has a 16MP Four Thirds sensor, while the hybrid electronic/manual shutter allows not only for silent shooting but also impressively high shutter speeds of up to 1/16,000sec.

Joining these is Wi-Fi, 5.8fps burst shooting, full HD video recording with stereo sound, and a generous helping of Creative Control modes such as retro and toy effect.

Impressively, the camera bears dimensions similar to the petite GM1, with the tilting touchscreen helping to make the most of its rear panel. Unfortunately, the build quality feels a bit plasticky.

Autofocus is reliable in both good and poor light, and about the only operational criticism lies with sluggish image playback.

Both lab and real-world testing show a reasonable level of detail captured by the



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
★★★★★
TESTED 11 APRIL

sensor, with dynamic range as expected for a Micro Four Thirds sensor but noise starting to become visible after ISO 100. Thanks to in-camera processing, however, the worst noise is removed from images.

Overall, while certainly capable in its own right and full of charm, it's difficult to ignore the strengths of the GF7's competitors. As a lightweight second body for Micro Four Thirds users, however, it makes plenty of sense.

At a glance

- 16-million-pixel, Four Thirds MOS sensor
- Measures just 106.5x64.6x33.3mm
- Weighs 266g with battery and card
- Built-in Wi-Fi
- ISO 100-25,600 (expanded)
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting LCD touchscreen
- Price £341 (with 12-32mm kit lens)



Panasonic Lumix DMC-G7

The technologically impressive G7 includes 4K video in an affordable DSLR-style body

ONE of only a handful of CSCs to sport 4K capture, the Lumix DMC-G7 appears as something of a slimmed-down GH4, particularly as it inherits that model's 2.36-million-dot OLED viewfinder and 1,728-zone multi-pattern metering system. It uses a 16MP Micro Four Thirds sensor, and burst rate is a respectable 8fps.

Furthermore, in addition to recording 4K video, 4K Photo mode allows 8MP images to be extracted from 30fps footage. There's also a full HD alternative, while a 49-point contrast-detect AF system, 3in articulated touchscreen and Wi-Fi round off the highlight specs.

The G7 adopts a decidedly angular design, with a deep rubberised handgrip to ensure a secure hold. Lots of physical controls give direct access to common settings, although the top-plate feels a bit flimsy.

The AF system is impressive, with continuous focus working well and focusing during video recording being pleasantly discreet.

Looking at image quality, dynamic range is marginally better than that of the previous G6,

but it's a little behind some of the camera's APS-C competition, while noise isn't particularly visible until ISO 800. Resolution also manages to remain pleasingly high until ISO 6,400.

In summary, the G7 is an enjoyable camera to use with reliable image quality. The wealth of compatible Micro Four Third optics makes it all the more appealing.



At a glance

- 16-million-pixel, Live MOS sensor
- Micro Four Thirds lens mount
- 8fps continuous shooting
- 4K movie and 4K photo functions
- ISO 100-25,600 (expanded)
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen
- Price £500 (body only)



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8

With its 20.3-million-pixel sensor, the GX8 is the highest resolution Micro Four Thirds camera to date

ONE OF the advantages of mirrorless cameras is the range of form factors they can be made in, and Panasonic has exploited this more than anyone else. With its chunky, rangefinder-style design, the GX8 is an enthusiast-oriented camera with a huge feature set. It features a large corner-mounted 2.36-million-dot EVF that tilts upwards by 90°, and a fully articulated 3in touchscreen. Four-axis in-body stabilisation works with any lens, and an electronic shutter option allows silent shooting at up to 1/16,000sec.

The new 20.3MP sensor offers the highest resolution of any Micro Four Thirds camera to date, and brings other improvements in image quality with improved high ISO performance and dynamic range. Continuous shooting is available at up to 8fps, along with 4K video recording and Panasonic's clever 4K Photo mode, which allows 8MP stills to be extracted from 30fps video footage.

With a plethora of external controls, the GX8 handles well. Yet while most of them can be customised, remembering what all the buttons actually do can be a trial, as several

are unmarked. Autofocus is exceptionally fast and accurate, and exposure generally reliable. Image quality is very good up to ISO 3,200, but Panasonic's JPEGs look a bit bland.

Overall, there's a lot to like about the GX8. It may lack the charm of the Olympus OM-D E-M5 II, but it's a very strong competitor and probably Panasonic's best CSC to date.



At a glance

- 20.3-million-pixel Live MOS sensor
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot OLED touchscreen
- 4K video recording
- In-body image stabilisation
- ISO 100-25,600 (expanded)
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- Price £920 (body only)



Samsung NX500

With a 28MP sensor and 4K video recording, the NX500 has impressive specs

CONSIDERING its reasonable price tag, the Samsung NX500 appears far better specified than one would expect for a camera targeted towards a non-professional market.

Its 28MP back-illuminated APS-C sensor comes from the flagship NX1 model, as does 4K video recording, while the DRiME V processor allows for 9fps burst shooting. As we'd expect, Wi-Fi and NFC are included, and more unusually, so is Bluetooth.

A hybrid phase and contrast-detect AF system covers practically the entire image area, and while there's no viewfinder on board (nor the option to use an external unit of any kind) the rear 3in AMOLED screen tilts and responds to touch. Sadly, testing reveals that the display isn't very easy to see in bright light, and this is the camera's main downfall. It's a shame as otherwise things are largely positive: handling is excellent, the autofocus system is sophisticated, and the ability to focus continuously while shooting at 9fps is useful.

Image quality is similarly impressive, with



Amateur Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 2 MAY

excellent detail at lower sensitivities, good dynamic range, and low noise throughout the sensitivity range.

While Samsung's future plans for the NX line may not be clear and relatively few compatible lenses are available, the NX500 deserves high praise, particularly at this price.

At a glance

- 28-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- Samsung NX lens mount
- 9fps continuous shooting
- 4K video recording (with 1.7x crop)
- ISO 100-51,200 (expanded)
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting touchscreen
- Price £600 (with 16-50mm kit lens)



Sony Alpha 7 II

Sony's update to the popular Alpha 7 features an improved design and in-body IS

SONY has spent the past year or so updating its Alpha 7 models, and it's the Alpha 7 II that arguably holds the widest appeal. Its 24.3MP sensor places it on a par with many full-frame DSLRs, while at around half the price of the Alpha 7S II and Alpha 7R II it's by far the most accessible.

Key changes from the original include a new 5-axis in-body image-stabilisation system, which promises a 4.5-stop shutter-speed advantage, together with a redesigned body and a broadening of the video options.

The 24.3MP CMOS sensor and Bionz X processor have remained, although updated AF algorithms promise a 30% improvement in autofocus speed and a better handling over focus tracking.

Thanks to a substantial grip, the camera handles much better than the Alpha 7. A revised layout places most of the key controls within easy reach of thumb and forefinger, akin to those offered by many DSLRs.

The image stabilisation proves to be effective, while the autofocus locks on to static subjects quickly and perseveres when light



Amateur Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 31 JANUARY

levels drop. The EVF falls a little short with its colour accuracy, although there's little to fault with the LCD beneath it.

With the same sensor and processor, the camera repeats the Alpha 7's excellent low-sensitivity dynamic range, great control over noise and punchy colours through most of the ISO range. Combined with the growing number of full-frame FE lenses, it's one of the most appealing full-frame cameras yet.

At a glance

- 24.3-million-pixel, full-frame sensor
- 1,200-zone metering system
- 0.5in, 2.4-million-dot EVF
- 117 phase-detection AF points, 25 contrast-detection AF points
- ISO 50-25,600 (expanded)
- Price £1,240 (body only)



Sony Alpha 7R II

Its 42.4MP backlit CMOS full-frame sensor makes this a heavyweight contender

SECOND in Sony's updated Alpha 7 range is the high-resolution Alpha 7R II model – and it's a monster. Built around a 42.4MP BSI CMOS sensor, it's narrowly pipped by the Canon EOS 5DS twins in terms of resolution, but makes up for it in other ways.

On-chip phase-detection elements contribute to a hugely sophisticated AF system that covers most of the frame. Impressively it works with both adapted Alpha DSLR lenses and Canon EF lenses using the latest Metabones Smart Adapters. Inside the redesigned body is 5-axis image stabilisation that works with all lenses, and is very effective in real-world shooting. Handling is improved via a beefier grip and repositioned controls. A much-refined, quieter shutter includes both an electronic first-curtain option and a completely silent fully-electronic setting.

The high-speed Bionz X processor enables 5fps continuous shooting, as well as internal 4K video recording. The 2.36-million-dot EVF is superb, giving a large, detailed view. Image quality is phenomenal, with huge resolution

and dynamic range, and exceptionally low noise – even ISO 12,800 is entirely usable.

The main criticisms are the relatively poor (290 shots) battery life and the lack of touchscreen functionality. Despite this, the Alpha 7R II is easily one of the most exciting – and best – cameras that's appeared this year.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 5 SEPTEMBER



At a glance

- 42.4-million-pixel, full-frame sensor
- 0.5in, 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- 399 phase-detection AF points
- 5fps continuous shooting
- ISO 100-25,600 (ISO 50-102,400 expanded)
- 4K video (100Mbps)
- Price £2,600 (body only)

Sony Alpha 7S II

The Alpha 7S II targets those specialising in video and low-light photography

ALTHOUGH the refinements made to the Sony Alpha 7S II might not seem as revolutionary as those made to the Alpha 7R II, the Alpha 7S II naturally progresses from where the Alpha 7S left off.

Key improvements include the addition of 5-axis in-body-stabilisation system, a newly designed shutter that's approved to 500,000 cycles and a 2.36-million-dot resolution EVF that's identical to that found on the Alpha 7R II. Videographers are well catered for with a plethora of professional video functions. There is the option to record 4K internally without pixel binning and the introduction of S-Log3 gamma is designed to offer better tonal reproduction from shadow to midtone than S-Log2. There's more on offer to entice professional video use too, not least its 120fps Full HD recording option that's great for creating slow-motion movies.

The Alpha 7S II might seem like it's lacking in terms of its pixel count with its 12.2-million-pixel full-frame CMOS sensor, but by opting for fewer and larger pixels Sony has created a model that produces an impressively high

dynamic range and performs remarkably at very high sensitivities. Users can confidently shoot at ISO 25,600 and preserve a level of detail that makes this setting usable. If you're into video, want an Alpha 7-series that performs exceptionally well in low light and one that handles significantly better than the original, the Alpha 7S II delivers the goods. The only flaw is its rather poor battery life.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 28 NOVEMBER



At a glance

- 12.2-million-pixel full-frame sensor
- 2.36-million-dot XGA OLED Tru-Finder EVF
- 3in, 1.23-million-dot articulated LCD
- 4K video recording
- 5-axis image stabilisation
- ISO 100-102,400 (ISO 50-409,600 expanded)
- Price £2,500 (body only)

Canon PowerShot G3 X

The G3 X offers fine image quality and a long 600mm-equivalent zoom, but falls short elsewhere

CANON'S PowerShot G3 X is a bridge camera that uses a 1in sensor for improved image quality and, with its 25x 24-600mm equivalent lens, has the longest zoom in its class. The trade-off is a relatively slow maximum aperture of f/2.8-5.6, but image quality is really very impressive.

Unfortunately, the G3 X ends up being less than the sum of its parts, due to Canon's decision not to include a built-in electronic viewfinder. This makes using the long lens something of a trial, and while the camera works much better with the optional EVF-DC1 attached, it adds £200 to the price.

Sadly, the G3 X falls short against its competitors in other areas as well. Continuous shooting speed is comparatively slow, and if you shoot raw it drops below 1fps. The camera struggles to track focus on moving objects too. This means that it's not necessarily a great choice for sports and wildlife photography – exactly those subjects the long zoom looks best suited to. Its video specification, while quite competent, also lags behind its 4K-capable competitors.



If you're looking for a camera with a very flexible zoom range to shoot mostly static subjects, then the G3 X should fit the bill, especially if you're prepared to spend the extra for the add-on EVF. But if you can make do with a shorter lens, other cameras offer a better overall package.



At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in BSI CMOS sensor
- 24-600mm equivalent f/2.8-5.6 lens
- ISO 125-12,800
- 1.62-million-dot tilting touchscreen
- Dustproof and splashproof construction
- 5.9fps continuous shooting
- Price £750

Canon PowerShot G5 X

Canon's latest enthusiast compact combines DSLR-like design with lots of external controls

LAST year Canon launched the G7 X compact as a direct competitor to Sony's popular RX100 series. The G5 X is essentially a beefed-up version, with the same 20.2 MP, 1in sensor and 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 lens. However, it's had a radical design overhaul, adding a centrally mounted electronic viewfinder, fully articulated touchscreen, and additional external controls. As such, it's a direct competitor to the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 III, that should appeal to photographers frustrated by the small and fiddly buttons and dials found on most compact cameras.

The viewfinder is a decently sized 2.36-million-dot unit, with a pop-up flash at the front of the housing and a hotshoe on top for external units. There are no fewer than four control dials, with one each on the front and back joining Canon's familiar lens-control ring, and a dedicated exposure-compensation dial on top. Many of the controls are user-customisable, and Canon's excellent touchscreen interface is on board, too. Naturally, you get a full range of features,



including built-in Wi-Fi with NFC, full HD video recording, and continuous shooting up to 5.9fps.

It seems clear that the G5 X is the spiritual successor to Canon's PowerShot G16 – the last in its long-running G-series of enthusiast compacts with 1/1.7in sensors – and its combination of photographer-friendly controls and electronic viewfinder looks appealing. However, the EVF housing means that, while still pretty small, it's no longer truly pocketable.



At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in CMOS sensor
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot TFT LCD
- 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 lens
- ISO 125-12,800
- Price £630
- Not yet tested

Canon PowerShot G9 X

With its slimline design, the G9 X is a pocket camera for discerning shooters

MARRYING a 20.2MP, back-illuminated 1in sensor with a diminutive minimal body, the PowerShot G9 X appears intent on elevating the standard of image quality above what would ordinarily be suggested by a camera of its size.

Its 28–84mm (equivalent) f/2–4.9 lens is optically stabilised, while the DIGIC 6 processor supports full HD recording up to 50/60p and a respectable 6fps burst rate. Wi-Fi and NFC are also built in.

At just 30.8mm thick, the camera is eminently pocketable and it's particularly handsome in its two-tone brown/silver finish, although a black option is also available. With only four buttons on the rear beside the 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen, the design may irk those who prefer physical controls.

There is, however, a top-plate mode dial with the PASM quartet of exposure options and a custom option, a control dial around the lens and a flash that retracts into the top-plate. The textured finish on the front plate also makes a nice change from the flat, grip-free surfaces found on many similar models.



At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in sensor
- 28–84mm equivalent f/2–4.9 lens
- Optical image stabilisation
- Shutter speeds 30–1/2,000sec + bulb
- ISO 125–12,800
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot fixed touchscreen
- Price £400
- Not yet tested

Having just been released, the G9 X is somewhat disadvantaged by sailing close to its recommended retail price, and is outgunned in many areas by the similarly priced, two-year-old Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 II. But on paper it should certainly appeal to those who require a high-quality small camera.



DxO One

DxO's tiny camera module plugs into an iPhone and offers excellent image quality

FRENCH company DxO is best known to photographers for its image-processing software, but now it has produced its first hardware device. The aptly named One is essentially a high-quality compact camera without an LCD that plugs into, and is controlled from an iPhone via a swivelling and folding Lightning connector. Its only external control is a shutter button on top.

With its 20.2MP, 1in sensor and 32mm equivalent f/1.8 lens that's protected by a sliding cover when not in use, the One offers vastly better image quality than the iPhone's built-in camera, giving more detailed images in good light and much less noise in low light. Both JPEG and raw images can be recorded to a Micro SD card, and JPEGs are also copied to the phone's camera roll. This gives a much more seamless experience when sharing your photos, compared to existing camera modules that connect to the phone using Wi-Fi.

When we tested the One shortly after launch it felt very much like a work in progress, with a disappointing battery life and an overly simple camera app. But DxO has



Amateur Photographer
Testbench
★★★★★
TESTED 26 SEPTEMBER

At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in, BSI CMOS sensor
- 32mm equivalent f/1.8 lens
- ISO 100–51,200
- PASM, scene and auto modes
- JPEG, DNG raw and DxO SuperRaw formats
- Connects to iPhone or iPad via Lightning connector
- Price £450

committed to continuously improving it, by both updating the firmware for the camera module and adding extra features to the control app.

If you're an iPhone user looking for a tiny carry-everywhere camera capable of excellent image quality, the DxO One is certainly worth a look. But it's not yet quite ready to replace a high-quality pocket zoom compact for enthusiast photographers.



Leica Q (Typ 116)

A very modern camera in a retro-styled body, the Leica Q is one of our favourite models of 2015

WITH a price tag of £2,900, the Leica Q is the most expensive compact camera on the market. But with its 24.2MP full-frame sensor, image-stabilised Summilux 28mm f/1.7 lens, and 3.68M dot viewfinder, it's also arguably the best.

With its chunky body, analogue controls and Leica's signature rounded edges, the Q draws heavily on the company's M rangefinders for its design inspiration. It has analogue dials to set shutter speed and aperture, and a beautifully damped focus ring that feels just like using an old manual lens. But it's all electronic really, which allows the Q to offer fast and silent autofocus too.

In fact, it has an impressively cutting-edge feature set, including a 3in touchscreen that can be used to set the AF point, 10fps continuous shooting, built-in Wi-Fi and an electronic shutter with speeds up to 1/16,000sec that kicks in automatically when needed.

Image quality is simply stellar – the lens is superbly sharp, and the sensor gives excellent results up to ISO 6,400. At low ISO sensitivities



Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 18 JULY

raw files show impressive dynamic range, and lots of extra detail can be pulled up from the shadows. The in-camera JPEGs give attractive colours, with a nice black & white mode too.

Ultimately the Q is an impressively complete camera, with its advanced features all working together to make it a real pleasure to use.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- Leica Summilux-M 28mm f/1.7 Asph lens
- 10fps continuous shooting
- 3.68-million-dot EVF
- ISO 100-50,000
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen
- Price £2,900



Olympus Stylus Tough TG-4

This year's best rugged underwater camera includes raw image recording

OLYMPUS'S TG line has traditionally offered some of the toughest bodies in the waterproof compact category, while also producing very attractive images that are among the best in this class.

The introduction of raw shooting – a rarity on waterproof models – only strengthens the TG-4 in this respect. It works in tandem with the camera's 16MP, 1/2.3in back-illuminated sensor, which is fronted by a 25-100mm (equivalent) f/2-4.9 optic.

The camera's tough credentials match those of the TG-3 it replaces, with waterproofing down to 15m, shockproofing to a height of 2.1m and freezeproofing down to -10°C. There's also full HD video, an underwater HDR mode and a variety of macro settings, as well as Wi-Fi, a built-in electronic compass and GPS to keep track of your adventures.

Both shock and freezeproofing claims are borne out through testing, while underwater performance is also commendable. The camera's textured thumb rest and grip make handling underwater easy.

Happily, the camera's autofocus system



Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 6 JUNE

delivers a rapid performance underwater, while the underwater image modes keep colours vibrant and details well recorded at the camera's base sensitivity of ISO 100.

It may not be the cheapest of rugged cameras, but the TG-4's solid performance and image quality go a long way to justify its price. Furthermore, the ability to customise the camera with a range of lights, converters and cases broadens its flexibility still more.

At a glance

- 16-million-pixel, 1/2.3in sensor
- 25-100mm f/2-4.9 4x optical zoom
- 3in, 460,000-dot LCD screen
- Full HD 1,920x1,080 video
- ISO 100-6,400
- Wi-Fi connectivity and GPS
- Price £282



Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ70

With an upgraded 1.16-million-dot viewfinder and raw capture, the TZ70 is an accomplished superzoom

WITH strong competition from other camera manufacturers, Panasonic's travel-friendly TZ line of superzoom compacts may have lost some of its sparkle in recent years. But the TZ70 justifies its place at the table with a well-rounded set of core specs and a handful of additional niceties such as an EVF, raw capture and an intervalometer for timelapse recording.

Panasonic has dropped the sensor's pixel count from 18.1MP to 12.1MP, which should bode well when shooting in low light, but it has increased the EVF's resolution to an impressive 1.16 million dots. Given that most of its peers fail to offer a viewfinder of any kind, it's encouraging to see progress here.

In use, the benefit of this boost is clear to see, even if the finder is overly contrasty making highlight details difficult to view. Still, the eye-sensor to the side of the unit is a nice touch, while the 23-zone AF system works well, only slowing down as you approach the telephoto end of the lens. Processing speeds could also be a little faster.

Lab testing shows good results at lower



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
★★★★
TESTED 21 FEBRUARY

ISOs, but noise is a problem from ISO 1,600 upwards. Use in more everyday environments reveals a tendency to underexpose on occasion, although this can be easily rectified.

The TZ70 is an ideal companion camera for holidays and travel, but you couldn't go wrong having a camera like this with you at all times.

At a glance

- 12.1-million-pixel, 1/2.3in High Sensitivity MOS sensor
- Leica 24-720mm f/3.3-6.4 DC Vario-Elmar lens
- 0.2in, 1.16-million-dot live viewfinder
- ISO 80-6,400
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot TFT LCD (100% field of view)
- Price £265



Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ330

A splashproof body, large viewfinder and constant f/2.8 zoom lens make the FZ330 a strong performer

OF ALL the major camera manufacturers, Panasonic has made the greatest effort to integrate 4K video recording across its range. The FZ330 is the company's first bridge-style superzoom recipient.

The successor to the popular FZ200, the camera maintains the same 12.1MP 1/2.3in sensor and 25-600mm (equivalent) lens, whose constant f/2.8 aperture is noteworthy. But the Venus processing engine has been updated and Panasonic's DFD (Depth from Defocus) technology has also been thrown in to hasten focusing speeds.

As with the FZ200, manual control over exposure has been partnered with raw shooting, while the body has been furnished with a 1.44-million-dot OLED EVF and a fully articulated 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen.

The dustproof and splashproof casing feels solid, while well-spaced controls allow you to access many features without delay. Autofocus is almost instantaneous in good light, with hunting confined to darker conditions.

In good conditions the camera is certainly capable of vibrant, sharp results that would



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
★★★★
TESTED 12 SEPTEMBER

survive modest enlargement. However, the small sensor quickly shows its limitations in more demanding conditions.

With Panasonic's FZ1000 only marginally dearer and offering better image quality from its larger sensor, those who are drawn to the FZ330 but can make do with a slightly shorter lens should consider this model too.

At a glance

- 12.1-million-pixel, 1/2.3in High Sensitivity MOS sensor
- Leica 25-600mm f/2.8 DC Vario-Elmarit lens
- ISO 100-6,400
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot vari-angle LCD
- 12fps continuous shooting
- Price £500



Ricoh GR II

The addition of Wi-Fi and NFC connectivity keeps the GR II up to date

ANNOUNCED two years after its GR predecessor, the GR II serves as a gentle upgrade over that model, carrying over the same 16.2MP APS-C sensor, 28mm (equivalent) f/2.8 lens and GR Engine V processor, and most of the rest of its specifications.

The most significant update is the inclusion of Wi-Fi and NFC, which allows users to quickly share their images without the hassle of cables. The auto white balance system is also said to have been tweaked to improve its accuracy. Following its purchase of Pentax back in 2011, Ricoh has also gifted the camera with the Color Temperature Enhancement mode that has previously featured inside a handful of Pentax's models.

More minor changes include six new Effects modes, improvements to both battery life and raw burst depth and the ability to use the camera with wireless flash set-ups. But otherwise, the model does much the same as the GR did. The magnesium-alloy body is



furnished with a 3in, 1.23-million-dot LCD and plenty of physical (and customisable) controls, while the hotshoe on the top-plate allows users to broaden its functionality with either a flashgun or electronic viewfinder.

While it certainly fits the bill as a high-performance, go-anywhere camera, the fact that little has changed from the GR may sway some towards the older model, that can still be found for around £170 less.



At a glance

- 16.2-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens
- Ricoh GR Engine V
- Wi-Fi and NFC connectivity
- ISO 100-25,600
- 3in, 1.23-million-dot TFT LCD
- Price £530
- Not yet tested

Sigma dp0 Quattro

It's an odd-looking camera with a fixed wideangle lens, but the dp0 Quattro gives impressive images

SIGMA has a long history of making compact cameras with APS-C sensors and fixed prime lenses, but the dp0 Quattro is its most unconventional yet. Like previous models it's based around Sigma's unique Foveon sensor, which records colour using three stacked layers of silicon that are sensitive to blue, green and red light (conventional sensors use coloured dyes over the light-sensitive pixels). This gives exceptional detail and fine colour gradation at low ISOs, but the disadvantage is poor image quality at settings of ISO 1,600 and above.

The lens is a fixed 14mm f/4 that gives a 21mm equivalent wideangle view. It's physically huge, almost 9cm long, which combined with the wide, low body and rearwards-angled grip, makes the camera a very strange shape. But optically it's stunning: sharp from corner to corner, with minimal distortion or chromatic aberration. You'd have



At a glance

- 19.6-million-pixel, APS-C Foveon X3 Quattro sensor
- 21mm (equivalent) f/4 lens
- ISO 100-6,400
- 3.5fps shooting
- 9-point AF
- 3in, 920,000-dot 4:3 LCD screen
- Price £749

to pay a lot of money to buy a DSLR lens that can beat or exceed it.

Despite its odd grip, the camera handles quite well, with twin control dials on top and quick access to most functions via the QS

button. It's not an all-rounder by any stretch of the imagination, and the Sigma Photo Pro software needed to process its raw files is slow and clunky, but it's an interesting option for subjects such as landscapes or architecture.



Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX90V

Borrowing heavily from the RX100 design, the HX90V is a neat little travel zoom

SONY'S HX series of travel compacts are strong challengers to Panasonic's TZ line, and the HX90V arrives not only better specified than the previous HX60V but decidedly more compact too.

Its most significant improvements are a pop-up OLED viewfinder, together with a display that can be tilted 180° to face the front. The camera's 24-720mm (equivalent) f/3.5-6.4 lens has also been equipped with a control ring, for functions such as manual focus, zoom and aperture.

Being significantly slimmer than previous models, the HX90V is truly pocketable. This is despite its pronounced grip, which improves handling and stability. The camera's viewfinder assists in bright light, but is small and overly high in contrast. The autofocus system is speedy in fine conditions and still acceptably quick when light levels fall.

Despite the camera's small sensor, it is capable of decent image quality. The metering system is sound and details are recorded well at lower sensitivities, with good colour rendition and auto white balance



Amateur
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Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 4 JULY

performance. Image quality, however, drops significantly after ISO 800.

Overall, image quality and functionality have noticeably improved from the HX60V. Some will no doubt lament the loss of an exposure-compensation dial and a hotshoe, but the HX90 is still an excellent travel camera.



At a glance

- 18.2-million-pixel, 1/2.3in Exmor R BSI-CMOS sensor
- 5-axis image stabilisation
- Bionz X processor
- Zeiss Vario-Sonnar 24-720mm (equivalent) T* f/3.5-6.4 lens
- ISO 80-3,200
- 638,400-dot OLED EVF
- Price £310

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX1R II

The RX1R II is the first camera to boast an optical variable low-pass filter

ARRIVING four months after the sensational Leica Q (Typ 116), the RX1R II looks set to challenge its rivals in the full-frame compact camera market by introducing a compelling set of cutting-edge features. Just like the original RX1 and RX1R, the RX1R II sports a fixed 35mm f/2 Zeiss Sonnar T* lens behind which lies a 42.4-million pixel, back-illuminated Exmor R CMOS sensor. This teams up with a Bionz X image processor to deliver an ISO range of 50-102,400.

The most interesting new feature is the RX1R II's optical variable low-pass filter. It's the first of its kind and works on the principle of applying voltage to a liquid-crystal layer sandwiched between two low-pass filters to control what Sony calls a light-splitting function. The result of this function is that users can choose the degree of low-pass-filter effect in their images.

Elsewhere, there's a 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF that pops up from the corner of the body. The RX1R II also features a Fast



Hybrid AF system comprising 399 phase-detection AF points, is said to be 30% faster than the RX1R, and it supports 14-bit uncompressed raw shooting. One of the biggest surprises is the absence of 4K video, but it maintains the excellent build quality of the RX1/R. With a robust metal body it feels every bit as solid and refined as you'd expect.



At a glance

- 42.4-million-pixel, full-frame Exmor R CMOS sensor
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- Zeiss Sonnar T* 35mm f/2 lens
- Wi-Fi and NFC enabled
- ISO 100-25,600 (expandable to ISO 50-102,400)
- 3in, 1.29-million-dot LCD screen
- Price £2,600
- Not yet tested

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX10 II

Sony's update to the highly regarded RX10 adds faster shooting and 4K video recording

WITH a new 20.2-million-pixel, 1in stacked CMOS sensor and 24-200mm equivalent f/2.8 lens, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX10 II takes all the best bits from the first-generation camera and then goes one step further.

Images produced by the 20.2-million pixel sensor look great, with lots of highlight and shadow detail. The zoom range should cover the needs of most photographers, and the f/2.8 aperture is very handy in low light.

Build wise, the RX10 II is, in many regards, like using an entry-level DSLR. It has lots of the buttons and dials, including an exposure-compensation dial and aperture ring on the lens. The 3in, 1.23-million-dot screen tilts up and down, but it's shame it isn't a touchscreen. Excellent image stabilisation and built-in Wi-Fi round things off.

However, it's the extra video capabilities that really caught our imagination. Not only can the RX10 II shoot full 1,920x1,080 resolution video, but it can also record 4K footage that can be saved internally. The camera has an addictive high frame rate mode that allows footage to be captured at up to 1,000fps and



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
TESTED 29 AUGUST

played back in slow motion, so for example, one second becomes 40secs. The footage is captured at fairly low resolution and upscaled to Full HD, but is still impressive.

If you're looking for an all-round camera, the RX10 II is hard to beat, and our pick of the current crop of superzoom bridge cameras. Sadly it comes with a price tag of nearly £1,200.



At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in Exmor RS CMOS sensor
- Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* 24-200mm equivalent f/2.8 lens
- 4K video and super-slow motion (1,000fps)
- Bionz X processor
- ISO 100-12,800 (expanded to ISO 64)
- Price £1,170

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV

Like the RX10 II, Sony's latest RX100 model includes a new sensor for faster shooting

SONY'S Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 series of compacts has been hugely successful, with the cameras' high performance belying their diminutive proportions. And while the mark IV iteration doesn't deviate too greatly from the path set out by its predecessors – it looks almost identical to the RX100 III and maintains the same 20.1-million-pixel resolution and 24-70mm (equivalent) f/1.8-2.8 lens – it debuts a stacked Exmor RS sensor with a revised constitution that allows 16fps burst shooting and 4K/UHD video recording, among other things.

Indeed, video seems to be a strong focus with the RX100 IV, with the S-Log2 gamma setting found in professional video cameras and the option to capture 17MP stills while recording, as well as a 1,000fps capture option for slow-motion footage. High-quality results can be obtained at more conventional video settings too.

The upgraded 2.36-million-dot viewfinder is noticeably crisper than the previous 1.44-million-dot version. But while the tilting LCD also puts in a strong performance, it



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Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★
TESTED 15 AUGUST

would be even better if it were touch sensitive.

Image quality from the camera is a plus point, with solid performances from both metering and auto white balance systems, and images showing wide dynamic range and excellent detail. This is, however, also true of the RX100 III, which is still available for considerably less than what the RX100 IV costs. Overall, it's a capable performer, but one that comes at a higher price than the similar model it succeeds.



At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, 1in Exmor RS CMOS sensor
- Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* 24-70mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 lens
- Bionz X processor
- ISO 125-12,800 (expanded to ISO 80/100)
- 4K video and super-slow motion (1,000fps)
- Price £815

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